A MAGAZINE FOR COLUMBIA & SOUTH CAROLINA

osceola

25¢

Number 2

June 13, 1972

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osceola

Rip-off at the wholesale corral

by John Norton

" . . . 'but the worst part was I'd paid $1.69 a pound for hamburger and stew beef' . . ."

Several weeks ago, a Columbia housewife answered an ad in a local newspaper promising fantastic bargains on bulk meat -- - for just $.59 a pound, the ad proclaimed, she could purchase up to 400 pounds of "U.S. Gov't Inspected Heavy" beef, enough to feed her family for months to come, while at the same time staving off the rising price of staples in the Phase II economy.

The ad promised all meats were "fully guaranteed to be tender and delicious in writing, or your order will be cheerfully replaced within ten days?" She called for an appointment.

"They called me about 2:30 p.m. on Friday afternoon," she remembers. "The person on the phone told me my meat was in and I should come and pick it up."

When she arrived at the business's location, she found a line of eager buyers already there. "When I went into the office, the salesman told me the type of meat I wanted was all sold out, but that they had this other meat which he could offer me for the same price." The salesman took her into a meat locker where several sides of beef hung from ceiling hooks.

"He asked me if I could use 200 pounds of fat," she said. "I told him of course not, I didn't have any use for fat. Then he showed me the meat. It was old and covered with yellow fat; it looked horrible. I told him I certainly didn't want that."

"Well, these cows that came in were extra fat," he told her, "and after they're dressed down, you only get about 150 pounds of usable meat (out of 300 lbs.)." The salesman then pointed out another side of beef hanging nearby.

"It was beautiful," she told me. "The meat was dressed and you could tell it was good just by looking at it." The salesman told her if she had the good meat trimmed, it would average out the same.

"I didn't know what he meant by that," she said. "No price was mentioned. I assumed it was the same price but I wasn't sure. I thought it might be a little more, so I asked him how much it was. He said, 'let me set it up on contract for you', but I said no, I want to know how much it's going to be. He said 'what do you mean?' and still wouldn't tell me the price."

The salesman took her back to his office and delivered his pitch. "Finally he told me it was going to be a little over $500 for 300 pounds. I told him no, I can't afford that. He asked me how much money I had. I had a blank check, but I told him about $200 because that's all I planned to spend. He said, 'Well then, let me give you $200 of this meat.'"

"By this time," the housewife told me, "the salesman had me very confused. He kept talking and I got more confused. I still thought I was going to get the meat for $.59 a pound. I was so mixed-up I couldn't figure out how much a pound the numbers came out to ... he was a fast talker."

The salesman asked her how many people were in her family and emphasized how long the meat would feed them. Finally, she agreed to purchase a little more than $200 of the beef, believing she would receive half a bull with the usual variety of cuts. She filled out her check, the meat was cut and wrapped and loaded in her car, and she received a sales slip (which did not bear the company's name).

Generally satisfied with her purchase, the housewife arrived home, unloaded the beef and placed it in her freezer. Having never bought meat in such large quantities before, she had little idea of how much bulk was involved, but as she filled her freezer, she noticed many of the packages were labeled to indicate they were the kinds of meat generally used as stew beef and hamburger.

"I took out the sales slip and examined it more closely," she said. "When I finally figured it out, I saw I had gotten only about 165 pounds of meat -- but the worst part was I'd paid $1.69 a pound for hamburger and stew beef. I could have bought steaks for that price."

Realizing she had been duped, her first reaction was to try and hide the fact from her husband. "I thought about taking money from our savings account and covering up for the check, since I keep up with the savings. I didn't know what else to do. I thought if I stopped payment on the check, the people who sold me the beef might have me arrested or something. I knew how mad my husband would be. And since I'd taken the meat home, I figured I was stuck with it."

When she went to work that afternoon, the woman told her employer about the incident. He suggested she ask an attorney for advice, but she said she was reluctant to spend additional money on legal fees when she felt her chances of recovery were poor. Her employer called the firm's attorney, who advised her to stop payment on the check.

The next week, her husband attempted to return the beef to the company, but they refused to accept it, indicating they couldn't resell frozen meat. And after discovering the housewife's check was no good, the beef dealers went so far as to turn the check over to law enforcement authorities.

"There I was with the sheriff parked in my front yard," she said. "I didn't want my neighbors to think I was a criminal, so I called the attorney and told him what happened."

The attorney, she said, wrote a letter to the discount beef business, indicating the possibility of fraud charges being brought against the operators.

"They were sweet as sugar after that. They finally came and got the meat and that was the end of it."

The victimized housewife was fortunate; an attorney's letter was enough to recover her loss...but while one consumer was saved, the company was left to continue its dishonest trade practices. Instead of risking

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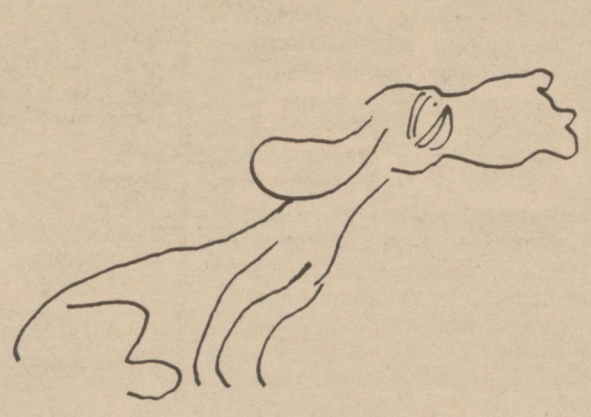
CHEAP SHOTS



Take Two

While the editors of Osceola have no particular desire to carry out an extended vendetta against any individual, including former county attorney Joseph Sapp, we feel that certain events which have transpired since the publication of our first issue require clarification.

In that issue, a former Richland Memorial Hospital employee produced information indicating that while serving as county attorney, Sapp failed to pay three hospital bills totaling more than $1800.

Subsequent reports in the daily press produced the information that during his tenure as county attorney, Sapp provided legal assistance to the hospital during its first financial crisis in late 1969-early 1970. Following this crisis, Sapp billed the hospital for $15,000 in legal fees.

According to hospital board members and administrators, no arrangements were made with Sapp relating to payment at the time the services were rendered. Robert Hudson, vice-chairman of the board of trustees, told a reporter, "We did not employ him and there was no discussion of fees...we assumed his services would come out of his normal retainer as county attorney."

County Council chairman John V. Green confirmed Hudson's remarks, stating there was never any agreement to pay Sapp extra compensation for the hospital work.

Despite these statements, Richland Memorial issued a news release adopting the logic that "since the amount Mr. Sapp invoiced the hospital is greater than the amount owed the hospital by Mr. Sapp, this account is currently inactive."

The news story in The State quoted a hospital spokesman as stating that "the old Columbia Hospital did not press for payment" of the bill.

Yet according to documents provided to Osceola, a letter written on Columbia Hospital stationary and dated April 24, 1970 -- shortly after Sapp completed his services -- indicates that the hospital did in fact "press for payment."

The letter is signed by the assistant credit manager and reads: "Dear Mr. Sapp: On March 20th this office sent to you a statement of your hospital bill for your confinement of 2-28-70 through 3-13-70 in the amount of $832.00. I tried to contact you this morning by phone but was unable to do so as there was no answer at your home.

"Please contact this office right away and advise us as to your intentions in liquidating this account." According to the assistant credit manager, Sapp never replied to his letter.

Additionally, through press reports and comments from hospital spokesmen, a false impression has been created that Sapp incurred the hospital bills totaling $1800 during the period he was providing legal assistance to the institution. While it is true the $800-plus bill was incurred during that period, two other bills were for confinements prior to the financial crisis, one of them dating back to 1968. Records indicate the bill was written off long before Sapp performed the legal services.

One other point should be brought out also. In the Osceola interview, the former hospital employee produced documents showing that the hospital credit manager provided Sapp with itemized statements of the 1970 bill "...because I have been informed that you bill your insurance direct."

The itemized bills necessary to collect an insurance payment were provided, according to the former employee, despite the fact that the hospital's policy is to withhold such statements until a bill is paid in full -- particularly in the case of a patient with a record of non-payment.

In an attempt to follow up on this information, a reporter for The State checked county records and found that although Sapp was a member of the county group insurance plan, no claim was ever filed or processed. According to the former employee, the reporter failed to realize that the overwhelming majority of group insurance plans will pay basic group benefits only to the hospital itself. Itemized statements such as the ones provided Sapp are generally given to patients with private policies which often pay in addition to a group plan.

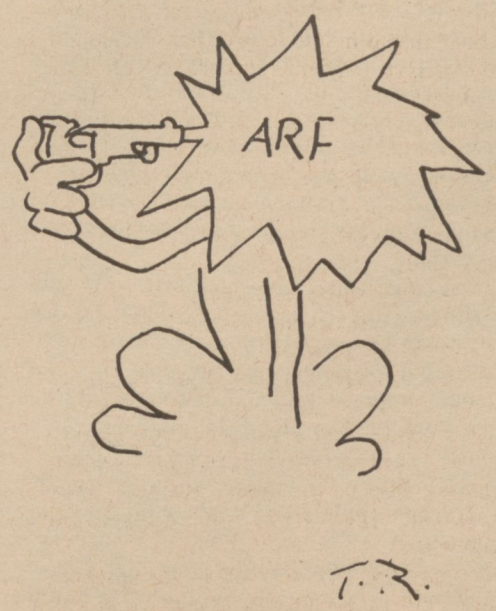
Osceola has no way of knowing if Sapp has or had such private policies, or if he collected on them; only that the necessary forms were provided for that purpose. It appears exceedingly ludicrous however that Sapp, having been intimately exposed to the hospital's financial woes for more than three months, or the hospital itself, which could have easily checked into the matter, failed to even file a claim against the county health insurance.

The highlight of the mild controversy which ensued following the publication of our interview came when the Richland Memorial Hospital board of trustees discussed the Sapp issue at its May 12th meeting.

In an unusual display of generosity, the board voted to reconsider paying Sapp for his legal services rendered more than two years ago...while administrative officials at the same time indicated the $1800 bill would be resubmitted to Sapp --- presumably for payment. Two board members were designated to determine an "equitable amount" to cover Sapp's legal services. One of the members chosen -- Robert Sims Brown -- served under Sapp as assistant county attorney prior to his appointment to the board.

As for Sapp himself, he has chosen for the most part to remain outside of the issue. When first asked by a reporter to comment on the hospital's explanation as to why the bills weren't paid, he said it was accurate as far as he was concerned. "I wouldn't quibble with it for a minute," he said.

In a later story, he described the editors of Osceola as "a bunch of kids running a scandal sheet" and said out of deference to the hospital's current shaky financial situation, he thought it best to hold the controversy to a minimum.



Guiding Hand

The plaque reads: "Clyde A. Eltzroth Building - Chairman, South Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission - A Guiding Hand in the Evolution of the Marine Resources Center."

It was quite a tribute to the wildlife resources chairman, who less than six months ago was caught up in a heated controversy involving questionable conduct on the part of the wildlife department--conduct which so enraged some politicians and private citizens that they called for Eltzroth's immediate resignation. In fact, newspaper reports at the time indicated that the Governor himself asked Eltzroth for his resignation, but the commissioner refused.

The controversy centered around the commission's indiscriminate firing of three high-ranking wildlife officials, political favoritism in granting usage of the commission's Belmont Plantation hunting facilities, and the wholesale purchase of boats for selected private citizens by the wildlife department.

But at the gala dedication ceremonies, it appeared that all was forgiven. West himself delivered the dedication speech, praising Eltzroth and Sen. Ernest Hollings for their work in establishing the marine research center.

So it appears time can indeed heal all wounds--and with a little political plastic surgery, you can even hide the scars.

Corn, okra

Talk about inflation! Since our last edition the price of the Miskie Water Quality Bill has doubled or tripled.

Congressman William Jennings Bryan Dorn, D-S.C., now charges that the total cost of the Muskie bill as passed by the U.S. Senate will be between $2- and $3-trillion, a substantial mark-up since his last report.

Addressing the S.C. Textile Manufacturers Association in Georgia (hug?), Dorn ad-libbed, "There is as much oxygen in the air now as there was a century ago."

He also ventured that the Muskie bill would ne dothing to clean up water.

Meanwhile, Dorn seems so concerned over the fate of the Trotters Shoals project locally that he may get out his famous garden tools and do the job himself.

According to the Congressman, every day that the project is delayed "is a day wasted." Dorn further said that the Shoals represent "one of the largest areas of undeveloped land in the country." Rumor holds that the fertile land in that area is "just right" for growing rows of corn and okra.

Dorn has also proposed that the lake which would result from the project be named in memory of former Georgia Senator Richard Russell. Curiously enough, up to this point Georgians have indicated strong opposition to the proposal.

Wise Solons

Oxymoron: Etymologically, "pointedly foolish"; a rhetorical antithesis bringing together two contradictory terms. Such a contrast makes for sharp emphasis. Examples are: "Cheerful, pessimist," "wise fool," "sad joy," "elloquent silence."

A handbook to Literature
Thrall, Hibbard, Holman

Last May, the S.C. House of Representatives passed a freedom of information bill.

As passed by the House, the bill would assure that public agency records--except for a specified list--would be open to the public. The bill also provided for open meetings of all public agencies--unless closed through parliamentary procedures.

On May 16, the Senate presented its version of the same freedom of information bill.

As passed by the Senate, the bill would assure that no person would be granted access for publication of any public agency

records--unless permission was granted, individually, by the responsible public agency. The Senate version made no changes in the original bill concerning open meetings.

After a pregnant silence of three days, Sigma Delta Chi, a professional journalists' association, and the S.C. Associated Press News Council finally spoke out against the outrages of the Senate bill.

Robert G. Liming, Vice President of SDX and a "State" reporter, perhaps best describes the Senate Rules Committee's motives for amending the House bill.

"It would appear that most of these changes are aimed at destroying the original intent of the legislation. The committee appears to be more interested in restricting the public than protecting its right to know."

Robert A. Pierce, managing editor of "The State," presented a resolution condemning the committee's action to the AP council. His resolution passed unanimously.

Pierce's resolution stated: "The amendments destroy the original intent of the measure. We oppose adoption of the bill which, we feel, violates the spirit of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution." Quite an exacting analysis.

Osceola, at this time, would like to ussue the following statement concerning the "freedom of information" bill presented by the committee:

The Senate Rules Committee, through its rare and precious coupling of the phrase "freedom of information" with the piece of legislature that the committee did present to the Senate, has presented the state with the best oxymoron we have heard since a bill entitled "Tidelands Protection" was introduced

A Good Deal

You know Art Linkletter. He wouldn't recommend anything he didn't believe in. Nothing but a through-the-mail hospital insurance policy which promises to "supplement" your other insurance by offering $500 "cash" a month when you require hospital care.

What Art doesn't tell you, and what you may often not find in the fine print of the brochure is that the money comes to $16.67 per day, enough to pay for about one-fifth of current daily hospital costs.

If you have an accident (which usually costs more), the policy will pay you the first day you enter the hospital. If you're just sic, the policy begins paying the sixth day one day beyond the average hospital stay for treatment of an illness. Should your children get sick, they get less--only about ten dollars per day (even though their bill could easily run as high as yours).

And for an extra $1.15 a month, you can get $500 per month in maternity benefits.

The $500 figure is misleading, for during an average three-day stay, you will receive only about $50, although you must pay $13.50 in premiums before you are eligible. The $50 includes your newborn baby's bill which, when combined with yours, would average more than $300 at current local hospital prices.

Should you go as long as two years without having a baby, you would still receive the $50, although your premium would have cost by that time $27.50 or more than half of the total benefit (assuming your premium isn't raised).

Although the premium is relatively small, about $6.10 per month for a middle-aged family with two children and maternity coverage, the ratio between the cost of premium and the amount of cash benefits payable is much smaller than most group policies or individual policies written by a local agent.

The policy is also deceptive in that it promised to pay "for life" if necessary; while in reality, very few people spend more than a few months in the hospital. Generally speaking, the policy will pay about one-tenth to one-fifteenth of hospital costs over an extended period of time.

Such mail order policies are most damaging to those people with little conception of how high hospital costs are these days--who may think that $500 a month is enough hospital insurance to cover all but catastropic illnesses. These people are likely to pay the six or seven dollars premium per month and forego other hospital coverage, even though they could purchase a life-health package from a local agent for about the same health premium which would provide them with four to six times as much coverage.

Many people also get the impression that they will receive the $500 if they are hospitalized for any portion of a month. It is easy to understand why these people are mislead when you examine a recent ad which displays a $1250 hospital bill for a two-week stay and asks, in bold type, "IF YOU HAD AN ACCIDENT TODAY, COULD YOU PAY THIS HOSPITAL BILL?" The company's policy in this case pays $1000 per month, leading some readers to believe that the greatest portion of the bill would be paid by this insurance. Also, it is only in the fine print that you discover this policy pays for accidents only.

Another type of through-the-mail health policy plays on the illness-prone elderly who are often in constant fear of their health. This company distributes a brochure depicting a gray-haired man staring up mournfully from a hospital bed. The bold-faced caption reads: "HERE'S WHERE MOST FOLKS OVER 65 FIND OUT...TOO LATE..WHAT MEDICARE DOES NOT PAY..."

Yes, folks, for only $36 per year, you can get up to $50,000 life-time coverage with this policy. How can they offer it at such a low rate? "Because the initial deductible is not insured--that's still your responsibility."

Medicare patients staying in a semi-private room are unlikely to incure more than $20 in excess of their uncovered Medicare deductible during the first 60 days of hospital treatment. Less than five percent of such patients will remain in the hospital beyond 60 days. Even in the case of terminal illnesses, most patients are likely to be moved to a nursing home (covered by Medicare) within that period.

For most of the elderly, then, the policy requires $36 per year in premiums for about $20 worth of coverage.

All of these policies are brought to the attention of the public through brochures inserted in the Sunday edition of the local press. Preseumably, the policies are sanctioned by the S.C. Insurance Commission. But consumers should not assume that because the insurance is state-sanctioned and presented in the local press that it's a good risk. Check with a lawyer or insurance agent first.

Thought Police

The cameras are clicking away down in Polk County, Florida where school administrators have come up with a clever application of technology in the area of student discipline.

Certain of Columbia's "More-Discipline-in-the-Schools" groups should be delighted to hear that a manufacturer has developed the Analyst Super 8 camera which can monitor student classrooms, school hallways, or the entire campus by snapping pictures every thirty seconds, thereby catching the little criminals right in the act.

School officials report excellent results--discipline has greatly improved and the kids seem quite cheerful; the entire campus smiles every thirty seconds or so. But as columnist Paul Greenburg asks, "What are they thinking between clicks?"

"This development in society would, of course, appear first in the schools," Greenberg writes. "Kids aren't supposed to object. They're used to being ordered around. Many of them already have mastered the signs of superficial obedience."

Our question is, where are all the teachers while this is going on? Hiding from the cameras, perhaps, wondering who's next.

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Senior Editors . . . . . Randal Ashley, Mike Forth, John Norton, Tom Priddy, Mike Smith and Jim Walser
Photography Editor . . . . . Charles Denton
Contributors . . . . . Jerry Griggs, Ginny Manning, Park Morgan, Jerry Dyer, David Morrison, David Glass, Dale Perry, David Walker, Cecil Hare, Bob Thompson, Marilyn Walser, Page Lee Hite and Lewis Kirk.
Graphics . . . . . Tom and Terry Dimond
Advertising Representative . . . . . Jim Walser

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Available for part-time office work. Enrolled at USC for one course through summer. Prefer work related to legal professions. Secretarial and research skills. Phone 254-1863.

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Will pay highest price for South Carolina tokens including mill, bus, store, medals and etc. Write or send for my appraisal. Randy Chambers, box 326, Seneca, S. C., 29678.

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Wanted: a reel to reel tape deck and recorder. Speakers not necessary. Please telephone 782-7517 during the day.

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Looking for phone phreaks in the Columbia area. Call 252-8385.

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For sale: alto saxophone. Cheap. Very cheap. Excellent for beginner student. Please call 253-7816 anytime day or night. Keep calling. Don't give up. It's damn cheap.

+++++

To the person who ripped off my stereo: watch the bass response at high volume. Hope you enjoy it. Love and kisses, Ron.

+++++

Please send classifieds to Box 5033, Columbia, 29205. We'll run them for free.

Cromer

Tom always elects his man

"...'Ah, they've been trying to say that for years,' Elliott said. 'It's a pile of junk'...."

by Randal Ashley

"Osceola, huh. You're the people that caused my friend Joe Sapp some discomfort," County Treasurer Tom Elliott commented as we strolled through Richland County Courthouse offices filled with young, black and white faces.

"He was standing in the line of fire," I explained and we laughed a bit and let drop the subject of reporting the former county attorney's hospital bills.

Any interview with a professional politician involves a great deal of mutual sizing-up and Tom Elliott is a political animal. Political strategy is his life and he enjoys it. Interviews, if voters read and are at all influenced by them, are naturally part of strategy from Elliott's point of view so he didn't care much for my first statement question:

"Some people tell me you run a county political machine."

"Ah, they've been trying to say that for years," Elliott said. "It's a pile of junk."

But things steadied out as we talked and before I left he laughingly warned that I be careful of what I quote, "'course it doesn't matter much cause I'll just say, 'I don't know where that crazy fellow got all that stuff.'" That same famous Elliott humor crackled through the interview and his conversation was filled with home town talk and phrases like "I (sometimes, we) got him elected . . . ."

"Influential" or "politically powerful" are descriptions of himself that Elliott is fond of -- not that dirty word, "boss."

"I've got friends who listen to me politically," he said. "If they can influence others, good." There's no reason to be in politics, he says, except to sway events and "who am I going to appoint to county boards, my enemies?"

But what if those friends are black ministers and other leaders who distribute "tickets" in their communities on primary day with a slate of names checked as "suggested candidates"? (Republicans reproduced such a Democratic primary ticket in the '70 campaign in an effort to pick up "backlash" votes.)

"Let me say something about tickets, the treasurer began. "Have you never -- when you've got a long list of candidates and things to vote on -- written them down and taken them to the polls with you?"

I admitted I never had and we didn't talk about whether it made a difference if the ticket were a personal one or one for mass distribution in selected areas. The question of whether Elliott was is involved in such tactics was never broached but he personally endorses a slate of candidates "who will work for the good of the entire county."

One of Elliott's objections to the recommendations of the Richland County-City of Columbia Study Commission sheds light on his approach to government. The recommendation for merging city and county governments into a single new structure cites "improved representation" as the result of electing a mayor and five council members at large and five councilmen by districts. Elliott opposes the plan.

"The city and the county have both tried elections by districts and they were the worst governments they ever had," he said. For a "practical" politician who said he has "no theories or philosophies cluttering up my head," the treasurer was strong on this point. Elections by districts are factionalizing, he said, and the "quality of candidates is always lower." Elliott would prefer that county officials "live within a mile of each other" and "represent all the people of the county." Even though residents of any given area would help elect seven of the eleven men who would make decisions, factional deals would result according to Elliott. He would prefer that all areas vote for all officers at-large.

In politics where "getting elected is the name of the game," it should be noted that county-wide elections maximize the effect of endorsing a slate of candidates. Political parties exist for that reason. But in a primary, where all candidates supposedly get equal treatment from their party, a slate of candidates backed by an influential vote-getter becomes an immediate favorite if other candidates have no such endorsement from equally powerful quarters. And of course candidates appreciate all the help they can get and remember those who assist their campaigns.

Elliott said he has always worked for what is "good for me and my friends and government." Oftentimes friends become enemies over judgements of what is "good" and Elliott has made some adversaries in diverse quarters and all signs indicate they may be coming together in an attempt to relieve him of such difficult judgements.

J. Lewis Cromer, a former Richland County Democratic Party chairman who resigned after a series of conflicts with Elliott and other county officials, called a press conference in mid-May and denounced "Boss Tweed (meaning Elliott) and his political pawns." The occassion came a few days after County Supervisor C. Laney Talbert, another friend who had come to a parting of the way with Eliott, was stripped of his powers by actions of the Richland Legislative Delegation and County Council.

Standing with Cromer at the press conference were Mrs. Modjeska Simkins, a civil rights activist who has long urged blacks to fight "the invisible government of Richland County"; Shimmy Bloom, a restauranteer who lost a House bid in the Democratic primary; and George Shissias, chairman of a Richland County Republican Party that has never been able to break the Democrat's hold on the county.

The press conference was in support of Talbert but the message was to "the voters of Richland County -- Democrats, Republicans, black, white, young or old -- to do unto the fat cats of the county on election day what they have done to Laney Talbert -- put them out to pasture."

The "fat cats" weren't named but voters can expect to have things made more specific. Talbert had already planned to retire after his term as supervisor and he won't run for any office as a Republican. Democratic filing dates for county council have already passed but Talbert has some specific candidates in mind to receive his support.

Cromer is the most obvious candidate of the anti-Elliott group and political odds are best for him if he runs as a Republican. The county GOP would love to have a winner, especially a former Democrat who denounces Democratic "power brokers." and probably would push no demands other than that he bear the Republican label.

A Republican candidacy would also allow Cromer to by-pass a difficult, if not insurmountable, hurdle -- the Democratic primary. If there is any endorsement of a slate of candidates in the primary as there has been in the past, Cromer's name would not be among them. A one-on-one campaign against a "fat cat" offers Cromer his best chance of winning and, as Tom Elliott might say, only a fool would fail to play his strength.

The reasons for challenging Strom

by Jim Walser

There is one tormenting question this spring surrounding the emerging non-race for South Carolina's U.S. Senate seat -- that is, why bother with all of this?

Certainly, our representative democracy calls for periodic challenges to the incumbent, intended to sort of keep things on the up and up. Conventions, platforms, speeches and all the rest, however, often seem useless, mere formalities serving as much to keep Civics teachers employed as anything else.

For example, it seems likely that The Republic would still stand even if Republican Senator Strom Thurmond went unchallenged this November. But instead the Loyal Opposition has rushed about these last few months to uncover a candidate of some status to challenge, even while admitting that the chances of un-seating Thurmond are quite miniscule indeed.

There are reasons for this of course. Democrats, even rich ones, don't particularly relish the thought of pouring a quarter of a million dollars down an empty mine shaft like state Senator "Nick" Zeigler, the party's last-ditch, last-minute choice to challenge Thurmond. But Democrats in South Carolina feel obligated to make Thurmond expend at least some time, effort and money in his own re-election campaign in order to keep him from popping up too often on the old "campaign trail" with Republican state and local office-seekers, helping to build the GOP state apparatus from the "grass roots" level in which state party chairman Ken Powell insists it must be founded. Too much Thurmond, according to the "coattails" theory the Democrats are eagerly swallowing, could result in damaging losses on the state legislative level, an area where entrenched Democratic chieftains (you know the ones) would just as soon rule with an iron hand as they have in the past.

Thus when former Governor Robert McNair and Congressman William Jennings Bryan Dorn politely declined the politically suicidal prospect of opposing the ever-popular Thurmond -- though either McNair or Dorn might have ran relatively well, especially when compared to Zeigler -- the plan to draft a lesser-known candidate was concocted.

U.S. Congressman James R. Mann of Greenville, Lt. Governor Earle Morris and even Governor West himself were considered for the job, then forgotten. Finally Zeigler was deemed acceptable by the West-McNair branch of the party, though over some resistance from U.S. Senator Ernest Hollings who felt the Party should attempt to field a stronger candidate. (Hollings, interestingly, wanted McNair to run, so that McNair would not be in a position to run in the Democratic primary against Hollings in 1974 regardless of whether he won or lost against Thurmond).

Hence, the plan was simple: Zeigler would give up his legislative seat, receive enough funds and support to fight an effective "holding action" against Thurmond, then retreat to his Florence home and law practice after losing in November. Later, high-paying, lucrative judgeships, or perhaps a position high in the party structure, would await him, as is the case with most every out-of-work Democrat with a name in the state.

Unfortunately, as June approaches, the plan is not working out as well as intended, primarily because it precluded any challenge to Zeigler in the Democratic primary.

That illusion was broken in early April when attorney John Bolt Culbertson of Greenville announced he would challenge Zeigler, whom he called " a front man for the Democratic hierarchy in this state." Moreover -- and this is what must annoy Democrats concerned with those state legislative races -- Culbertson said that should he beat Zeigler, he wouldn't challenge Thurmond in November because he considered him impossible to beat, and because the "Democratic hierarchy" had already committed itself to Zeigler and would not give him equal help in the Senate race. Later, after charges that he was not a serious candidate and after receiving personal assurances from top-level Democrats that he would receive Party money and support, Culbertson amended his earlier statement, saying, "We're in it to win all the way."

It was virtually the only course for the Democratic Party, which had been cleverly backed into a corner by Culbertson because of its early committment to Zeigler. Otherwise, if Culbertson won the primary, there would be no challenge of Thurmond.

Culbertson is not a new name to South Carolina politics. He has twice sought the Democratic nomination to the Senate in primaries and he has lost both times. In 1966, P. Bradley Morrah, with the support of Party leaders, won by 20,000 votes out of 300,000 against Culbertson. Culbertson lost again in 1968, more profoundly this time, to Hollings.

Culbertson's history is one of a supporting liberal causes. He has long fought for black people, the poor, and for unionization of South Carolina's workers. He says it quite often -- and it is true -- that he fought for these things long before they became popular postures for South Carolina political candidates to assume.

There can be little doubt that Culbertson's liberal leanings are not easily digested by the South Carolina electorate. Newspapers in the state mostly ignore him (because they consider Zeigler the "serious candidate") or portray him somewhere politically left of Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman.

Realistically, Culbertson is far from radical, more from the Humphrey-Muskie liberal school on most issues. "I supported the two dollar minimum wage and Congress passed it the other day. I supported increased social security benefits and Congress passed that, too, the other day," Culbertson tells the Columbia Kiwanis club over cold cuts and chicken salad. "Does that make me a radical?"

Replete with his Old South attire -- blue, pin-stripped suit, white shoes and modish bow tie -- Culbertson is very much the extrovert in a world of look-alike businessmen. With what's left of his long, white hair flowing with his body movement, Culbertson speaks in short, unrelated bursts, always seeking a rather personal kind of interchange with the audience instead of the "prepared text" sort of delivery.

As a result of his speech-making technique, Culbertson sometimes fails to move an audinece, and other times keeps listeners very much enthralled. The Kiwanians were unimpressed. But speaking recently to the spring session of the South Carolina State Student Legislature, a group of predominantly-conservative "student leader" types, Culbertson received a prolonged standing ovation and dozens of pledges of support following a 20-minute tirade against the state legislature and the Governor. "They are all linked together to claim all the glory, honor and money for themselves," Culbertson instructs the crowd, with several legislators scattered through the room. "They've got money for a $5 million parking lot for the legislature, money for wildlife resources corruption, trips to Japan and raises in the salaries of state government people. But when a poor person asks for a decent living, all you hear about is 'welfare chislers.' "

Though he is 63 years old (Thurmond is 70, Zeigler 50), Culbertson figures to do well among young people. He has appointed 24-year-old Tim Rogers as his campaign manager. Rogers, who received some attention recently when he invited delegates to the Democratic state convention to "put up or shut up" in a debate over representative delegate selection, feels that the McGovern-Wallace "frustration vote" in national political primaries this spring will be a factor in the contest here as well. "We're definitely going to operate our campaign in a McGovern fashion, seeking youth and people who are simply frustrated with the party and the way things are going, both nationally and locally," says Rogers. Both Rogers and Culbertson are McGovern sympathizers. "I gave Hupert Humphrey $500 in 1968," says Culbertson, "but he's done a lot of things I don't like since then. I think McGovern is the most qualified candidate."

Zeigler, meanwhile, was a Muskie man until the Man from Maine quit the campaign recently. Zeigler was a Humphrey supporter in '68, and probably prefers Hubert again since Muskie's departure. He told a convention of South Carolina college newspaper editors in Charleston in March that he considers McGovern too liberal, but would "support whoever wins the nomination in Miami."

Thus far, Zeigler's campaign has focused primarily on speeches to small groups and he is dealing more with Thurmond at this point than Culbertson. Before Zeigler announced his candidacy some polls indicated he would lose to Thurmond by as much as 70-20 should he challenge. "But I don't believe in polls," Zeigler smiled when questioned by the college editors. "I think that people want an alternative to Senator Thurmond."

When one editor asked why Zeigler conducted his own poll shortly before announcing his candidacy, given his distaste for polls, Zeigler replied...with another smile..."Oh, that wan't a poll. I was trying to obtain a reading of my strength statewide. After a survey (called a 'poll' in the press), we decided to make a race of it." Zeigler also received a committment of $250,000 from sources.

The Democratic primary will not be held until June 27, and in the meantime Zeigler will seek to establish his centrist position between Thurmond on the right and Culbertson on the left.

Culbertson will tie Zeigler to the West administration, seek to shed his image as a loser and as a radical. "I only had $12,000 to spend in 1968 and still got 90,000 votes against Hollings," Culbertson told the editors in March after Zeigler was through. "And that was with them (the Democrats) counting the votes.

"I intend to do much better against Zeigler. After listening for an hour, I still don't know exactly where he stands on any of the issues -- defense spending, the war, welfare, and social security. As far as I can tell, he's no different from Strom Thurmond, and he's selling the same old stuff that Thurmond's been selling for years."

The editors stood and applauded.

Harrassment won't stop Bird

by Dick Harper

Tightly grasping a soft-drink bottle, a man entered the door. He stood around for a minute staring intently at a poster on the wall--"Mayor Sam Massell is bullish on Atlanta."

Whatever was in the bottle had a strange hold on the man. Obviously, he was waging a losing battle with his own nervous system.

"You folks new around here?" His stutter was uncontrollable; sounds spurted from his mouth like machine-gun bullets. But the man couldn't form words.

"Yea, we're from The Bird. We got bombed out last week so the Black Congress is letting us use its office."

The man drank from his bottle, making new attempts to speak. Slowly, he turned around, stared at a "Free Angela" poster, then oozed out the door.

The Bird, known to anyone who has driven down Atlanta's Peachtree Street between 10th and 14th anytime in the past four years, is The Great Speckled Bird, the biggest-selling "underground" newspaper in the Southeast.

"When we first came out, we were just another socialist outpost," says staffer Becky Hamilton. "We had all the cliches, all the slogans. Supported all the movements."

Sometimes around 5 a.m. on May 6, a firebomb totally destroyed new offices of The Bird. A next-door neighbor heard a "popping sound" and saw the blazes.

According to arson experts with the Atlanta Fire Department, "something similar to a molotov cocktail" was responsible for the damage. Authorities had only one clue to the bombing--"it was a professional job."

The Bird, however, has its own set of clues. After three years of legal and extra-legal hassles with the Massell administration, the bombing seemed the "coup de grace" in a conspiracy to destroy The Bird's business.

"We helped create and build a movement in Atlanta," Hamilton said, "and some people don't like that." That's motive enough, according to most Bird staffers.

Sam Massell, the alleged villain behind this conspiracy, ran for the office of mayor as an "anti-establishment" candidate three years ago. He denounced the racist machine with its iron hand. He was for youth, for blacks, for the poor. At every press conference during his campaign, he carried a copy of The Bird--often using it as a source to back him in his political preachments.

When Massell won the election, The Bird rejoiced--even the "hard-core" street people seemed to breathe a little better. This joy was short-lived.

Massell's first major task after assuming office was to "break the back" of a city-wide garbage strike. The move deeply stymied the black community's hopes for better working conditions, higher pay, and a friend at City Hall.

"Long hair in Atlanta is a one-way ticket to jail" since Massell's election, one Bird staffer said. "In Piedmont Park where the kids used to lay around and listen to music, cops bust heads frequently these days."

Sam Massell--responsible mayor of the South's only city--was cleaning up the Strip (Peachtree from 10th to 14th). Another campaign promise had been broken.

Tension along the Strip flared during the summer of 1970. Two weeks before the last Atlanta pop festival, a "pig pen" opened along the Strip. Atlanta's newest police precinct struck The Bird and street people as a direct threat to their lifestyle.

Still, most Atlanta middle-class voters weren't too upset over Massell's "cleaning up the streets." They were concerned, however, when newspapers--not just The Bird--alleged that the mayor's brother had "gangster connections."

According to these charges, Massell and his brother were "at least familiar with shady characters." The charges also claimed the two had extensive dealings with slumlords who, through rezoning, had torn down low cost though inadequate housing--leaving the poor homeless, getting rich off shopping centers.

The Bird, outraged with Massell's early breach of trust, began attacking the mayor and his brother with unusual candor. The Bird, however, wan't alone in its condemnation.

"The Massell brothers are less than clean," says one reporter for an Atlanta paper. Another Atlanta journalist describes Massell as "a short little man trying to make up for his size through his mouth. His ego is trememdous." Neither journalist works for The Bird.

With the threat of Massell alarming larger numbers of people, The Bird began changing. The rhetoric was muted. The Bird tried to transcend its image as "just another radical rag." Sam Massell soon replaced "shameless American imperialism" as Atlanta's biggest problem.

The Bird began studying Atlanta. The paper brought out specific examples of racism, fraud, and outright graft. Furthermore, the paper linked Massell with these "moral outrages."

Then, the "bullish" mayor could take no more, says The Bird. The two forces declared open war.

Massell's first successful counter-attack, supposedly, was the arrest of a street hawker for selling The Bird without a peddler's license. Street hawkers, who account for most of The Bird's circulation, had become an institution along the Strip. Motorists, in the past, had complained over their zeal and mad antics during the "rush-hour" traffic, but most Atlantans were used to the hawkers. After all, the dailies hawked their papers in the streets too.

The vice squad made the first arrest. The arresting officer never showed up for the trial so The Bird won that round. But, because of the first bust, every cop on the Strip declared "open season" on the peddlers.

Generally, Bird hawkers are drop-outs, longhairs, and poor white people who could use some loose change. A hawker with some flashy clothes, a good spiel, and busy corner can rake in quite a bit of jack rather quickly--especially from tourists.

When the arrests of hawkers increased, however, The Bird faced a new financial crisis. Street sales paid for the paper--without them The Bird faced grave money problems. Peddlers were arrested from crimes ranging in intensity from stepping off curbs to jaywalking.

The Bird claims that Massell and Vice Squad Chief E.F. McKillop were responsible for the arrests. At first, Massell had a lot of support for the arrests of the hawkers. He built a solid "law and order" campaign around the issue.

A much bigger threat popped up a few months ago when the U.S. Post Office in Atlanta refused to mail The Bird to 2800 subscribers under an 1861 law which prohibited the mailing of anti-abortion material. The Bird had been running the ad for three years before the post office decided to invoke the law.

The Bird managed to obtain a restraining order through a federal court ruling. The post office had to mail the newspaper.

Meanwhile, hawkers were still being busted, and The Bird was losing money. City officials still denied The Bird's charges of "undue harassment" and "conspiracy".

The paper filed a law suit against the city.

"If we were out to get you, as you claim," one city official told The Bird shortly before the bombing, "we'd be sending fire and buildings inspectors around. They could have you condemned."

The day before this conversation, a fire inspector had indeed visited The Bird's offices. Curiously, he filed his report with the vice squad and mayor's offices. On May 5, The Bird wrote the city explaining that all deficiencies listed in the report had been eliminated.

By late afternoon on May 7, The Bird was ready to go again. The Black Congress donated office space. Money came from people who had once hated The Bird.

The Bird appeared the next week--armed with a new feeling of dignity and righteousness.

"The people will make The Bird survive...." Candy Hamilton wrote "...the firemen who gave an all-out effort to save everything possible; the straight press who helped us inform the public; and the public in general who recognized the threat to freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and the inherent danger of stifling opposing ideas with a bomb."

In the second edition after the bombing, The Bird cockily announced:

"The Bird's federal court suit against the city for arresting Birdsellers has finally been set (for hearing)...The hearing will be limited to the legal ussues of the case--the city's conspiracy against The Bird and the selective enforcement of the peddler's license ordinance...Witnesses will include Vice Squad Chief E.F. McKillop and Mayor Sam Massell--come watch them squirm."

Of course, The Bird could be living a paranoid fantasy. Maybe Massell is a good mayor, an honest man. Maybe the city's "conspiracy" is just a commie's nightmare

But a lot of people in Atlanta believe The Bird. The paper was responsible in helping Massell crush the old machine when he was campaigning for mayor. With a new candidate, The Bird could possibly crush the new machine.

If nothing else, The Bird has taught its political enemies--whoever they be--that the paper is more than a business office with typewriters and filing cabinets.

The Bird is an idea--a vision--which has greatly matured during the last three years. And until that vision can be firebombed into ashes, The Bird will continue to exist.

Cinema / Culpepper's Cattle

Exploring the myths

"...It is an adventure -- a chance escape the safety of his mother's laundry and enter a dream world of 'real men'..."

Westerns, an ever-popular species of film entertainment, are usually built around one basic premise--the mail must get through, the whites must get through, the cattle must get through. This year seems to be the year of the cinematic cattle drive.

Earlier this year, "The Cowboys" hit the screens. To its credit, it was a better-than-usual John Wayne vehicle. Its basic idea was that the Duke must train a dozen prepubescent boys how to rope, brand and drive cattle to market--an experiment in free enterprise.

The film, however, was a bit of a shocker. Along the trail, Bruce Dern and a gang of meanies kill the Duke and the kids are left to fend for themselves. According to the "ideas" in the screenplay, these kids become "men" by killing off Dern and his gang, saving the cattle, and salvaging the Duke's reputation as the best trail boss in the West.

In short, the film was a nightmare. Aimed at "family audiences", it expounded the virtues of opportunism, vigilantism and violence.

Now, there is another film about a young boy (only one this time) who learns how to become a man through the ritual of a cattle drive. And he's older than Wayne's crew, so he'll be thinking about sex and drinking. This film will really corrupt our children, right?

Wrong. "The Culpepper Cattle Company" isn't a typical John Wayne movie. "The Cowboys" didn't go beyond the causes for violence, thus capitalizing on it. "Culpepper", fortunately, is more concerned with the effects that violence has on its young hero.

"Goodbye, Ben. You be good now," are the only words of advice the young man's mother gives him as he goes out the door. Like a child running away to join the circus, Ben signs on with Frank Culpepper as the drive's "little Mary" or cook's helper.

"A dollar-a-day and found" is all that Frank Culpepper can offer anyone to join his drive, but, to Ben, this is the chance of a lifetime. It is an adventure -- a chance to escape the safety of his mother's laundry and enter a dream world of "real men."

Ben is innocent. He's been "hopped up" on the idea of driving cattle by the old men who sit around the local store telling tall tales. Ah, but he knows: cattle driving will make him a man, show him the world, gain him a reputation. He'll be able to cuss and fight and whore and drink and gamble. He would be a cowboy.

"Cowboyin'", says the cook, "is what you do when you can't do nothin' else." But Ben won't or can't believe him. He can't allow anyone to destroy his dream.

As witness, victim, and participant, however, Ben learns that his "truth" isn't a necessary fact of life. And he learns that his own innocence and romanticism can be lethal weapons. These realizations finally lead him to manhood.

The manner in which Ben comes to terms with himself, his dreams and the "real world" is quite remarkable. Screenwriters Eric Bercovici and Gregory Prentiss have taken a story full of violence and concentrated instead on dialogue and character development.

The script is no more than a series of incidents held together by the cattle drive. What happens, basically, is this: everyday activities are halted by an alarm of some type. Culpepper and his men investigate and take "proper," usually violent, action. Then, a slowing of pace allows close study of Ben, Culpepper and the men to get their reactions to the incident.

Through this technique, the audience can grow with the characters in the movie. Bercovici and Prentiss allow the viewer to become, like Ben, witness, victim, and participant -- right up to the horrifying ending.

Director Dick Richards, however, deserves the credit for the film's technique and appearance. He provided the original story for the screenplay and has done an exciting job of filming the script.

At one time, Richards was a professional photographer. He then turned to directing television commercials. "Culpepper" is his first film so, quite naturally, he borrows heavily from his past experience. What this strange mixture of backgrounds presents is a realistically eerie picture of the Old West, death, youth, violence and character.

In the action and violence sequences, Richards has excelled in doing what Sam Peckinpah must have been trying to achieve with "The Wild Bunch." What Peckinpah presented was a well-directed ballet of death. His slow motion photography was great but he couldn't present a total picture of violent death because the element of action was missing.

Richards films his massacres at a break-neck speed. Bullets fly from all directions and blood splatters. Richards totally confuses the viewer. Then, WHAM! and the viewer gets a picture of a man's face and bloody body that hits with the impact of the best still photography and is gone in just a second so we don't forget the chaos of the fight.

Then come the lulls between the battles. Early in the film there is some excellent footage of the trail drivers at work. Richards wisely shows in great detail the work of these men to counterpoint Ben's foolish dream. Though they are totally editorial, Richards presents the scenes as a matter of routine without boring the audience. He works these scenes in much the same manner as a still photographer -- they are very definite images -- without laboring too long over any one picture.

Richards is at his best, however, when directing his actors. Ben's mother appears for maybe 30 seconds and speaks only one line (quoted above), but her presence is definite because of an underlying tension in the scene. In 30 seconds she conveys a strong picture of a frontier woman -- strong-willed yet subdued, hardened by work yet softened by her love.

The most powerful scene in the film involves a challenge to duel between two of Culpepper's own men. Ben has picked up Russ' pistol. Russ, the meanest man on the drive, takes this as an insult. Another man speaks out for Ben, calling Russ a "son-of-a-bitch." The challenge is issued.

Richards deftly sets up a delicate balance between the two men. As the audience sees one side giving in, the balance becomes more precarious, more lethal. Richards, through his two actors, shows just how important timing can be as the tension gradually builds.

Richards owes a great deal, however, to a fine cast. As Ben, Gary Grimes gives a splendid, solid performance. Grimes did an excellent job in last year's "Summer of '42." In "Culpepper" he is on his own: he isn't surrounded by actors his own age so he must carry a larger bit of the picture on his own.

Grimes appears at the beginning of the film as a bored kid looking for his romantic ideal. Slowly, the audience sees him mature through interior, mental change. Grimes handles this well. Quite surprisingly, as the picture progresses, he too seems to grow as a person. He reacts with sincerity to the violence he witnesses and even causes.

Billy "Green" Bush plays the important role of Frank Culpepper. Bush plays Culpepper as a man who is almost pained to speak. He is hard, determined, and cool. And he is a wise man who knows when to act and when to go his own way. Bush presents a strong screen image.

Culpepper is an open man, ready to give Ben the opportunity to prove himself worthy of his position, yet committed totally to getting his herd through.

The actors are some of the most realistic in a Western in many a year -- dirty, bearded, shabbily dressed, long-haired. Yet, each presents an individual with distinct character.

"The Culpepper Cattle Company" has already drawn comparison with "The Wild Bunch" and "McCabe and Mrs. Miller." It is, indeed, a different kind of western. Instead of romanticizing about the Old West, the film honestly explores the myths and legends and comes up with some bitter, bitter truths.

michael smith

Clockwork

Few American films have had the impact of Stanley Kubrick's "A Clockwork Orange." Those which have include two previous Kubrick phantasmagorias, "Doctor Strangelove" and "2001: A Space Odyssey." Kubrick's power as a director comes through in all three of these pictures. The effect which Kubrick achieves, that which makes "Strangelove," "2001," and "Clockwork Orange" so impressive, lies partly in Kubrick's willingness to tackle huge issues, issues which many films shy away from in an effort not to seem sophomoric.

Kubrick has confidence in himself, and in his ability to present such subjects with cinematic grace, which overcomes the melodrama toward which large social and philosophical questions incline. Kubrick's filmmaking is Wagnerian. It is unashamed of its immensity. "Strangelove" explored social violence, "2001," the evolutional inspiration of Man. In "A Clockwork Orange" the unleashing of man's more violent nature is traced to social dishonesty.

Malcolm McDowell portrays a future-age counterpart of current rebellious youth, in this case a youth whose rebellion takes the form of violence, much in the stereotyped spirit of today's motorcycle gangs. But McDowell's violence extends beyond mere youthful rebellion. It is a surfacing of those instincts for pure violence, violence undiluted by controls of society, violence created by the controls of society, idealized violence, violence enjoyed, violence releasing the frustrations of over-civilization, violence which reestablished the individual equilibrium. Ultraviolence.

Kubrick's handling of the violence in the film is careful and delicate. It is idealized, classical, much of it occuring just off camera or symbolically. There is little of the blood-gushing with which recent American films, good and bad, abound. Part of the reason for this may be in the fact that Kubrick does not want the viewer to become irrevocably turned against McDowell, for by film's end, the audience comes to sympathize with the character Alex, to applaud his demonic imagination.

For it is only through ruthlessness that he has the capacity for dealing with society. When he is caught for one of his crimes, Alex undergoes a sort of Pavlovian treatment in which any violent thought triggers extreme physical distress. Thus deprived of the ability to react humanly (violently) to disturbing situations, he is turned loose in a society anxious to have their share of the violent fun, this time at his expense, considering his helpless position.

Alex becomes a pawn in a struggle between two political parties which use him as a test case. His ability to react is restored in a political move to gain his support and thus remove the bad publicity which the other party had created surrounding the case. In the end Alex forms a temporary alliance with the government then in power, and the audience is relieved by the knowledge that he is no longer helpless, even somewhat admiring of his totally mercenary nature.

Initial opinions on "A Clockwork Orange" seem to have been almost exclusively positive. It received the New York Film Critics' award as Best Picture of 1971. Kubrick was voted Best Director of 1971. Both the film and Kubrick were nominated for several major Academy Awards. Any movie consistently praised naturally will create a number of discontented objectors, disappointed at the discrepancy between the fantastic experience promised by many reviews and the slow-starting reality of the film itself. Since its early enthusiastic reception the popularity of "A Clockwork Orange" has cooled. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences practically ignored the film in its annual presentation of Oscars this year. From its position of pre-emminence, "A Clockwork Orange" has become a sort of "black sheep" of the film world, a position no doubt enhanced by its undeserved "X" rating.

"A Clockwork Orange" possesses an aura of greatness which makes it a difficult film to deny. It is all, or nearly all, it is claimed to be. Visually, thematically, artistically, it is a most complex, thought-provoking, and creative motion picture. Why, then, is it unsatisfying? Why does it leave many unsure of the experience? One possibility is the disturbing character of its message. Where along the way does one first become allied with Alex, this unfeeling someone who has been capable of the most brutal rapes, murders, and beatings? How, in spite of it all, does one come to admire the man? One can only have been manipulated into such a position, and most of us tend to resent being manipulated, especially when the conclusion reached is distasteful. What has Kubrick tricked us into condoning -- revealing? Violence as the natural human condition denies itself in the civilized, sugar-coated mind. One cannot accept the conclusion. How can such a conclusion be accepted?

Perhaps a true assessment of the merits and faults of "A Clockwork Orange" may not be reached for several years, until enthusiasm and disappointment have balanced each other out. It is likely that the film will find itself the center of a cult much as exists around "2001" and "Dr. Strangelove" -- a smaller cult, but decidedly fanatic in its devotion.

jerry griggs

Music

Concert at Valley Park

"...If I had to do it over again, I'd probably use one or two less warm-up groups. It was a little slow, dragging at times...."

by Mike Forth

For a while it seemed as though Sunday's free concert in Columbia's Valley Park was fated to end before its main feature, the Chambers Brothers, ever really got under way.

The concert had gone generally well since it began at about 3 p.m. Slow at times, but well. The local talent — a pretty good ecoustic guitar set, and rock groups called Brother, Doo-Dah band, and B. J. and the Soul Creation — had kept the several thousand spectators entertained for the first four hours. The weather had been acceptable and staged difficulties were held to a minimum.

But, soon after the Chambers Brothers had finally finished their half-hour setup, the story began to change. Everything started to go wrong. The overcast sky and a slight rainfall threatened to cancel the rest of the concert. A 15-minute power failure after the group had really just gotten tuned up with the first couple of numbers complicated the situation. And, as if all this were not bad enough, a crowd of people, who had forced their way forward and were standing on electrical cables and generally too close to the stage, refused to move back even after being asked to do so several times. Things were not exactly peachy, to say the least.

Perhaps some knotheaded pseudo-journalist in the crowd found it somewhat symbolic of the Chambers Brothers overall success when all of the complications cleared up at once. It stopped raining completely, the power was restored, and even the crowd cooperated and temporarily pulled away from the stage.

The Chambers Brothers, who had patiently been standing onstage waiting, quickly took advantage of their stroke of good luck. They jumped into a tremendous set of hot, fast boogie, including outstanding performances of their long version of "Love, Peace and Happiness" from their album entitled the same, and "Time Has Come Today" from their Greatest Hits album. Many people enjoyed what appeared to be a completely uncapitalistic venture.

But even the free concert was not really a completely uncapitalistic venture, for while the Chambers Brothers turned on the audience, the whole affair was going down on tape. Six movie cameras and two 16-track mobile sound units from New York were scanning the stage and the crowd, capturing as much of the scene as they possibly could.

Behind the lens of one of the six cameras was a guy named John Lewis, the person principally responsible for putting on the whole free concert. Together with a group of about 40 or 50 friends he organized into a group called the New Generation, Lewis got permission from the city to use the park, arranged promos for the event on radio stations COS and WOIC, conducted the building of the stage, rented the cameras and recorders, bought the television film, and convinced the Chambers Brothers that it would be a good idea to come to Columbia.

"The whole idea was to make a film of the Chambers Brothers," Lewis said in an interview the day after the concert. "We hope to make a full-length documentary on them which might be run in the movie theaters. We're also planning to make a one hour film just on that day. We should be able to have that out in a few months."

Charlie Holmes, another member of New Generation who has worked along with Louis, said that the total cost of putting out the films could run as high as 60 or 70 thousand dollars. Holmes also said that Sunday was not the first time that they had tried to film the Chambers Brothers. "We traveled all around trying to film them, but for different reasons we never got a good film. Then, a couple of weeks ago we said 'Why not have them come to Columbia?' When we checked with them we found out that they would be coming through here on a tour, so we arranged to film it Sunday."

Lewis said that the name of his organization, New Generation, was actually taken from one of the Chambers Brothers's songs. He also said that he was very pleased with the response he got from the rest of the people in New Generation.

"None of us really had very much experience with conducting this sort of thing," said Lewis. "If I had to do it over, I'd probably use one or two less warm-up groups. It was a little slow, dragging at times."

Lewis, who claimed that there were as many as 10,000 spectators at the concert at one point, said that most of the concert turned out better than he had expected. "The police were really great ... There weren't any busts although there were quite a few narcotics agents ... The overcast sky was actually better for the type of film we were using."

As for the future of New Generation, Lewis says he hopes it will become "a very big thing." He says that he wants to see the organization grow "as an idea and a way of doing some really good things around here."

Cooper

Where is my music?

by Tom Priddy

I think I'm senile.

Yes, it's true; it must be true. In fact, it has to be true. Even as I sit here typing this I can feel my fingers cramp up as I get to the outer letters of the keyboard. asdfghjkl, They're all getting weaker and I can't even remember where they are anymore. I can't afford not to be senile. I have no other excuse.

Everything is blurry; it's all going by so rapidly. I can't remember anything. No, no, I **can** remember some things. I **can** remember. But they're only bad things. I can only remember the bad things, never the good. Everything seems bad. And, jeez, I'm only 21.

It all started with the Osmond Brothers concert in Greenville. All those little kids screaming at the five boys acting sexy. All those little kids being more of a show than the show itself. Five boys who can't play and can only half sing, but who put on a great show for 12 year old girls.

Yeah, but what happened to the music?

Then there was Rod Stewart at Clemson. Rod Stewart and the Faces with the world's only rock 'n' roll circus. A rock 'n' roll circus! My God, such irony we don't need. Just when rock was beginning to be more a circus than anything else what does he have to do but actually bring a circus to his show?

"Hey, how'd you like Emerson, Lake and Palmer?"

"The place was like a damn circus."

"Yeah, I know. But wasn't it great?"

If anything the show started off with the most appropriate opening act Stewart could possibly find: Free. Free has never been anything but funny in concert, and this time they were even more than funny; sad even. Five years ago when they were just starting out they were another heavy English band that was loud and obnoxious. So we gave the group a break because their records were better than their show, and well, the show is really different from the music, isn't it? Or is it?

So what do you say when five years later the group is worse than ever? Do you say that they're bad because they can't double track their live performance? Do you say they're bad because they can only play three instruments at once and they need four? Or do you just ignore them. A month after Free played at Clemson they were scheduled to play in Greenville with Alice Cooper. When the crowd was notified that Free wasn't going to be there they burst into spontaneous applause. I guess that means you have to ignore them.

But what about the circus? You can't ignore the circus. It was just **There.** The girl balancing on a rolling ball and the clown with the baloons and the emcee who kept on saying "in just a minute we'll have Ron Stewart" and middle-aged women (girl?) in the no-outfit handing out baloons and the guy balancing on the sword and the girl hanging from the roof by her hair. What about them? You can't ignore them.

Yeah, but what happened to the music?

Oh, I know what you're going to say. You're going to say that of all the people in the music world Rod Stewart is the one who can handle something like that. And I'll admit the four tuxedoed men playing the trumpet fanfare w
that. And of co
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You can't say th
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Take Alice Coope
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Chambers Brothers

New releases

Stephen Stills, who formerly had two more solo albums than he deserved, has now at least evened things up.

Manassas (Atlantic) is nowhere near perfect, but it does have its good moments. and it lets us know the guy is still alive. There are a few terribly good cuts on the album, and the only unfortunate thing about the two-record set is its length. Stills has apparently forgotten that an album is no better than its least common denominator.

Stills has been responsible for some of the best music I can remember, but all of it was performed under the tight control of a group. **Manassas** really is no exception. With this third "solo" album, Stills has finally gotten rid of the idea that he had to collect famous musicians' autographs on his albums before they were any good. With every great artist there has to be a certain amount of self-doubt, and Stills never doubted the fact that he was great. Apparently some of the musicians on **Manassas** did exactly what Stills needed, because he's finally shown a little restraint.

I'd have to say "Johnny's Garden" heads the list of good songs. It's got the "Rock 'n' Roll Woman" feel and the Springfield spirit. It also doesn't have the poor lyrics most of the other songs have.

Stills apparently has a philosophy, somewhat along the lines of Hefner's Playboy Philosophy, and he intends to pound it into our heads through installments. If Stills had learned to write lyrics a long time ago this album could have been a whole lot better.

Anyway, the main thrust of the album lies in the music. The playing is really very good, due in part to Chris Hillman, formerly of the Byrds and The Burrito Brothers, who has obviously done a lot toward keeping Stills in place. "It Doesn't Matter" is the album's single, and it should be really big.

Crosby-Nash

Unfortunately David Crosby and Graham Nash haven't fared as well. Their album, **Graham Nash-David Crosby (Atlantic)**-- cute title, huh? -- is about as boring as I thought Stills' album would be. The boys have a good group of musicians working for them, but doesn't everybody? I'll give them credit for using Craig Doerge on piano, but that's about the only point in their favor.

Nash's songs are for the most part very silly ("Immigration Man"), and Crosby's all sound as if they use the exact same chord progressions from "Triad." They have one very good song, "The Wall Song," on which they actually work together and complement each other, but they should have released it as a single and let it go at that. They can't win, but they keep on trying.

Jethro Tull

It should be fairly obvious by now that Jethro Tull can't possibly put out a bad album. **Thick As A Brick (Reprise)** is no exception. Unfortunately, I think they're getting too good for their own welfare.

Thick As A Brick is the type of album you appreciate more than you play. It's one continuous piece, very well done, and certainly the most sophisticated of all Tull's records. It does, however, lack excitement. The group is getting more technically perfect, more classical, and more exacting, but they're also getting less interesting.

Tom Priddy

Stewart

was funny. I could take urse Stewart gives a , probably the world's e one of the two or three proficient bands in the rt can make any song hat then is the problem? n is simply the fact that g overshadowed by the re no longer caring about e performance. Stewart ence, or charisma or e of his competitors has. age are excellent. His fect. His act (minus the but the point is this: ving the way for others to nd of the elaborate show, ers can really handle it? y been a follower all his ormers are going to want at he's doing. How many

e trend isn't going in the

r, for example. Alice was 4 and, of course, sold the People will go to hear ight anticipate the show, to hear Cooper **without** now. The music is just

one show, Cooper, who achman with vertical eye d chops up a baby doll, is ows and hanged (ap- add), plays with a boa xy (for those of you who hrough the fake rein- he white hat and gloves, the crowd, spits into the fight over who catches trap contraption (which ich enabled him to be s out dollar bills to the hem on his sword. (Have ersions?)

Now take Richard Nixon. He's our president. He kills babies and bombs factories and mines harbors and makes war and does a lot of other nasty things. (I know I've left out a lot of perversions this time.)

Richard Nixon alone is not nearly as obscene as the fact that he probably represents the majority feeling in this country. Now THAT is really obscene. One man doing it is one thing, but an entire nation loving it is something else.

We could live with Alice Cooper. We could learn to coexist. But when an entire nation loves the perversions of one man, that's out.

Alice Cooper is the ultimate Amerikan band. They've got greed and lust and hate and laughter all rolled into one. Alice Cooper is every bit as much fun as the bombing of Haiphong or the explosion of a napalm bomb, and he's every bit as obscene as the Vietman war. So why does everyone love him?

Oh, we deserve him, all right. We've made him what he is. He's no less American than Nixon. Mom, apple pie, the flag and the fag. Nobody's going to sit there and tell me that Cooper is showing us our perversions and is working all our frustrations out of our systems. Nixon's doing the same thing, and I really think we can do without that, too. There are lots of harmless ways of letting off steam and frustrations. Arthur Bremer never found them. He'd made a great playmate for Alice.

No, greedy old Alice isn't doing anything at all for us. He's just hiding the music, and the music the band plays (give or take a few lyrics here and there) is very, very good. Did anyone else hear it?

Where is my music? Somebody's been fooling around with it and I want it back. I need it to live. Life apparently is not what Cooper cares about.

I can hear him laughing all the way to the gallows.

Forgive me...I'm senile, remember?

Theatre

A gamble pays off

" . . . Ashley is trying to end the chaos around him through the establishment of some type of new order . . ."

"...Have you ever seen bugs trapped in amber?"

"Yes." Billy, in fact, had a paperweight in his office which was a blob of polished amber with three ladybugs embedded in it.

"Well, here we are, Mr. Pilgrim, trapped in the amber of this moment. There is no why.

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
"Slaughterhouse-Five"

Suddenly, this spring, Dr. Franklin Ashley has found himself in great demand.

He has just finished another semester at the Aiken branch of the University of South Carolina and has edited a collection of poems by public school students. His jazz trio has recorded some of his original works. And, on May 16, he witnessed the premiere of his two one-act plays, "Forever Amber," and "Midnight Ride."

That Columbia had the opportunity to premiere any play is hard to comprehend. Most aspiring playwrights with any pretentions of "making it" go to California or New York.

Ashley, instead, seems quite content to have returned to his hometown of Columbia to "sweat out" public reaction to his works.

"I expected a hostile, critical reaction," Ashley stated, "especially from the press. I knew I was hitting pretty close to home."

The morning after the premiere, Ashley is in good spirits. Decked out in a white suit with blue bow tie, he has just appeared on a local television talk show with his trio.

"Did you see the plays? How did you like them?", he impatiently asked. "The morning paper said 'Midnight Ride' was pointless."

Our quick discussion of the play breaks up. Ashley sees to his instruments. Then, we are ushered upstairs to listen to and watch his trio playing "Feelin' Alright."

At the Workshop Theatre, Cynthia Gilliam joins us briefly. Emerged in a pair of "owl-eyed" sunglasses, she is eager to discuss "her" two plays.

" 'Summer and Smoke' is a good play, but we knew that 20 years ago when it was first presented. Frank has offered me as a director my first chance to do something truly original, something everybody hasn't already seen."

She explained: "Frank didn't write in many italics (i.e. stage direction) so I had a lot of freedom in directing my actors.

"Besides, the two plays gave the Workshop a chance to actually serve the purpose of a workshop. We were open to experimentation," she added. Gilliam was quite pleased with her success.

Ashley expressed deep satisfaction with Gilliam and her production. "I was very interested in how my characters would look on stage," he said, explaining that he was quite pleased with the physical representations of his characters as well as with Gilliam's "exciting" direction.

A gamble had paid off for two serious young artists.

The two plays in question,"Amber Keyhole" and "Midnight Ride", are companion pieces. What holds them together is the character of Paul Hudson who, in the course of the plays, faces "life" and grows emotionally and philosophically.

He is first presented as a confused, paranoid young man. Someone on the faculty--probably Maggie or Artie--is stealing his mail. He wants to get his "letters" back.

Paul is also faced with other problems--the left side of his body "tingles"; his doctor is blind; his self-centered grandfather talks incessantly of his decaying body; his wife's family is a cliche.

The play is involved with Paul's attempts to restore order and morality to his life. When this fails, he can only survive because he knows that he, at least, is trying to achieve something, to seek the truth, escape hypocrisy, cast off years of bigotry and ignorance. He learns to accept a semblance of order and morality.

At the end of the play, his body still "tingles"; his doctor is still blind; his grandfather still dotes on his own physical decay; his wife's family is still a cliche. But Paul is able to accept this madness as an "occupational hazard."

Paul's revelation comes from Artie whom he accuses of stealing the mail. Artie is like the snake in the Garden of Evil--a hissing, writhing Uriah Heap. He glibly manipulates Paul with his flashy technique, his "command of the situation." Artie leads Paul back through the play in search for order and truth.

Ashley

And Paul tries valiantly to communicate. He tries to tell the truth. For his efforts, he receives the same standard diagnosis, the same tales of physical suffering, the same overblown cliches.

"Amber Keyhole" becomes a play without end. Paul could keep re-enacting his life but that would be useless. Each confrontation would be the same because Paul is the only character in the play who is trying to establish some sort of meaning in his existence.

Paul's tragedy is not his own doing. He, alone, is a bug trapped in amber. He wants an organized world because he is the only person who learns that ..."There is no why."

Under Gilliam's free direction, the Workshop players bring Ashley's characters to life quite well. Henry Everett as Paul is excellent in the first half, bringing both nervousness and a tone of condescension to the roles that enhances the early scenes--especially the one with his grandfather. He is less effective in the second half because he has not prepared the audience well enough for the astounding change which comes over Paul.

Jeffrey Judson is perfect as Artie. He has endowed his character with "natural" habits which makes Artie a more distinct person--his haughty tosses of the head convey sinister meaning, his agility shows how well he can control himself and Paul. Gene McKay, Jim E. Quick, Malie Bruton, and Christie Wells all give solid performances in supporting roles.

Ashley freely admits that Paul Hudson "is more like me than the other characters in the play." Like Ashley, Paul is a college professor, a writer, a Southerner who doesn't quite fit the mold. And, like Paul, Ashley is trying to end the chaos around him through the establishment of some type of new order.

In "Amber Keyhole" Ashley presents his order in a very clever manner--through his original music. Even at the play's most disjointed moments, the musical theme establishes a sense of order and control, always reassuring the audience.

"Midnight Ride" presents an entirely different Paul Hudson. In this play, Paul has become more sure of himself and his world. He has learned to accept more. He has undergone change.

The action of this play centers around Bobby Graham, a 26-year-old virgin who is trying to make a decision--bed his girlfriend or accept sex with a male friend. His inability to decide stems from his childhood and youth.

In a flashback, Bobby visits his dying grandfather. To his family, he has become a string of precious terms--"little man", "darling", "honey." His grandfather insists on a kiss from the young man. The old man, lying in bed, pulls Bobby down over him and gives him a kiss--almost on the mouth.

This scene has a great effect on Bobby. Clearly, he is a young man confused over his sexual identity.

Pau, rather suavely, cajoles Bobby to a redlight district in Atlanta to see out a black prostitute--the young Southerner's mythic dream of sexual heaven. Bobby agrees but is unable to confront Olanta McSheen so Paul arranges the match and ushers Bobby into King's Motel.

Now, Olanta McSheen isn't exactly class. She realizes she is a $15 whore and is quite frank about the matter. In a hilarious exchange of dialogue, she and Bobby meet. Olanta wins out, lights are extinguished, the two go to bed. The lights come back up to reveal Bobby once again leaning over in bed--with his dying grandfather.

"In 'Midnight Ride' I tired to do to the Southern WASP what Philip Roth did to the Jew in 'Portnoy's Complaint'." Ashley explained.

And he has succeeded quite well. Bobby's guilt, ignorance, and confusion are typical of the problems many young men have about sex. He is too much a part of the Old South--steeped in racial bigotry, sexual taboos, and interlocking familial relationships--to ever change. He is afraid to make the choice Paul has.

"Midnight Ride" is a clever dirty joke which rises above its own vulgarity because it rings so true. The play begs for Southern youth to accept a new vision, a new way of life--to experience and, yes, to even enjoy life.

Everett again plays Paul Hudson and seems to have a better command of the character in this play. Steve Earhart gives

Continued on page 15

The worst Cavett joke of all

"And because ABC feels it owes special favors to its advertisers, the network has decided that Cavett fellow has got to go."

Lying awake in bed. Can't go to sleep. Hmmm, may as well watch a little tube.

What's on? Oh, yeah, Carson in five minutes. Wait around for that.

Five minutes of local sports final, half dozen ads, peacock. And then the voice: "Substituting for Johnny tonight is Joey Bishop."

That happens all the time. Carson goes for a vacation and some dullard takes over for a week or two.

What to do? Solitaire is out of the question and drinking is too dangerous. THE movie? Click, click, click of dial and the CBS eye stares back at you.

The voice again: "Tonight's CBS Late Show is "The Glass Bottom Boat" starring Doris Day, Rod Taylor, and Arthur Godfrey." Anyone with an IQ higher than 15 vomits.

The other channel? Cavett! Wonder who he has on? Gee, I don't know about him Give him 15 minutes, if I'm still awake then, I'll watch some more.

Unfortunately, most people view Dick Cavett with a striking amount of uncertaintly. After all, he's the one who hosts all those liberals and unimportant people -- like museum curators and garbagemen

And, right now, he's the one with the low ratings. He's the one who has been given a 90-day ultimatum: "Improve the ratings or get off the air."

Who could really care about ratings between 11:30 and 1 a.m.? Well, ABC for one and all those "little people"--the local advertisers who can buy relatively cheap airtime for pushing their products late at night without having to worry about paying the big prices of "prime time."

These local advertisers are still paying a good deal of money for their ads and they want to make certain they get their money's worth. And, because ABC feels it owes special favors to advertisers, the network has decided that Cavett fellow has got to "put-up or shut-up."

And the first wave of ads are over. Cavett comes out with great fanfare and applause. Attempted joke. Few laughs. Another attempt, more laughs. One more joke and Cavett hits. He has now captured another night's group. Things are picking up.

Ninety per cent of the time, things are picking up on the Cavett show. Since he threw his hat into the ring against Carson and others, Cavett has always presented 90 minutes of good television.

Sometimes, it's just small pleasures--like Elsa Lancaster demonstrating the hell of putting on a pair of panty hose.

Sometimes, it's big things. Like Lester Maddox leaving Cavett's studio in a huff because someone has insulted him. Or Lily Tomlin leaving the studio because Chad Everett is a gaping idiot and a sexist pig. Or Zero Mostel, the best clown around, ramming his bulbous, rubbery face into camera lens. Or Charlton Heston picking his nose and laughing about it.

It was these things which helped Cavett knock Merv Griffin out of CBS' game-plan. Cavett was the Avis of late-night television. He gave good service and always tried harder.

But, when Griffin folded (if he ever unfolded to begin with), CBS needed something to "improve sagging ratings." So, many promises were made and a national late show was launched.

Since mid-February, CBS has shown some of the worst movies made during the '60's on its late night movie. Goodies like "The Glass-Bottom Boat, "The Subterraneans," and "Three Bites of the Apple."

Of course, CBS did run a good movie. "The Damned" was scheduled for airing after Hollywood had cut it once for general release and cut it again before selling it to CBS. Then, of course, CBS cut it again before offering it to affiliate stations.

But most CBS affiliates were still reluctant to run the movie. Somehow, every 2-inch brain at every CBS affiliate screened the film and about 40 affiliates decided that the movie was still too "dirty" to run. After all, in 1969 when it was first released, it was rated "X."

No station had the good sense to refuse to run the film because its total artistic impact had been destroyed. One of the biggest censoring jobs ever performed was considered useless. If a movie is dirty, it's dirty--no matter if over an hour of it isn't going to be shown.

The emasculation of "The Dammed" isn't CBS' biggest offense to date. When the late night movies were launched, huge promises were made. Big movies and screen classics were promised--like "Dinner at 8" and "The Maltese Falcon." To date, none of these promises have materialized.

What has materialized, however, is a threat. After three months, of, at best, B-grade flicks, CBS has moved into the number two slot. Cavett, the late-night darling of ABC-TV, is in trouble.

On May 2, Cavett talked of the "ultimatum." "Yes, I've been given 90 days to pick up my ratings. No, ABC has done nothing to really help me improve my ratings."

And then he introduced six members of New York street gangs. Six young men in black jackets walked onto stage and, for the next 100 minutes, the seven talked about street gangs in New York and violence and drugs and "real things" like people starving to death in dirty, over-crowded ghettos. (ABC did have the decency to run the show past its 1 a.m. dealine for the conversation to come to a natural stopping place.)

Carson, to his credit, usually presents a very entertaining show. He has always concentrated on attracting large audiences by using really big names--a sit-down Ed Sullivan show. His recent move to Los Angeles will aid him even more in this.

Perhaps Carson's most dynamic show in recent months was one which featured a relatively unknown person--French pantomimist Marcel Marceau. This man is a genius and Carson, quite naturally, let the man display his genious.

Marceau's pantomimes were excellent. Carson talked with him with care, letting the artist take the lead in conversation.

This, unfortunately, isn't Carson's usual means of handling a show. Most of the time, he tries to control his guests while they are on stage, tending to interrupt good conversation for the sake of his own quick wit--then becoming hopelessly lost in the silence that often follows.

Which is the basic difference between Carson and Cavett. Carson, with all his big names and his own group of regulars (Hines, Hines & Dad, Phyllis Newman, Tiny Tim, Tony Randal, Totie Fields) is in the game of "late-night entertainment." He is a clown who makes a million or so yearly. His show fills about 390 hours of TV time for NBC.

Cavett, on the other hand, is much neater. He is not an entertainer, i.e., his primary reason for keeping you awake at night is because he has something he really thinks you should see or know. He's an informer and that's why he pads his show with pepople like museum curators and policemen and school teachers.

One show, for instance, demonstrates just how well these unknowns can function. Last fall, one of the biggest and most phenomonal heists in New York City history was pulled off in a very fashionable downtown hotel. Cavett's guest was the police officer in charge of the investigation--a man who seemed to fit Rock Hudson's TV image as Commissioner MacMillan.

The officer talked with great authority about what happened during the robbery. Then, a joke and the audience and Cavett laughed. Suddenly, this guest was more than just a policeman talking about his trade. He was a good news source and a good personality.

And, usually, Cavett would rather present good personalities, unknowns, and allow them to instruct and entertain his audience. That's why the lady from the museum comes by frequently and displays her insects. She's quite comical and she knows a lot about bugs.

Also in Cavett's credit list is his specials. He knows that TV is a small medium, that over-crowding a small screen with two or three dynamic personalities can be disastrous.

For the specials, Cavett usually picks a larger-than-life personality to talk with for the entire 90 minutes. People like John Lennon and Yoki Ono, Charlton Heston, Lunt and Fontaine, Zero Mostel, Fred Astaire, and Shirley Temple Black have been given an entire program to present as much of themselves as they care to. Overcrowding would have cheated the audience.

The next three months are very crucial to Cavett's future. During that time he should be presenting his best efforts because he likes doing what he's doing. And he wants to continue doing it.

One very important question that ABC should be asking itself right now is "after Cavett, what?" If ABC cannot justify Cavett's show because of low ratings, what can it offer as an alternative?

Well, late-night movies seem to be profitable for national networks. And Joey Bishop is still looking for a job.

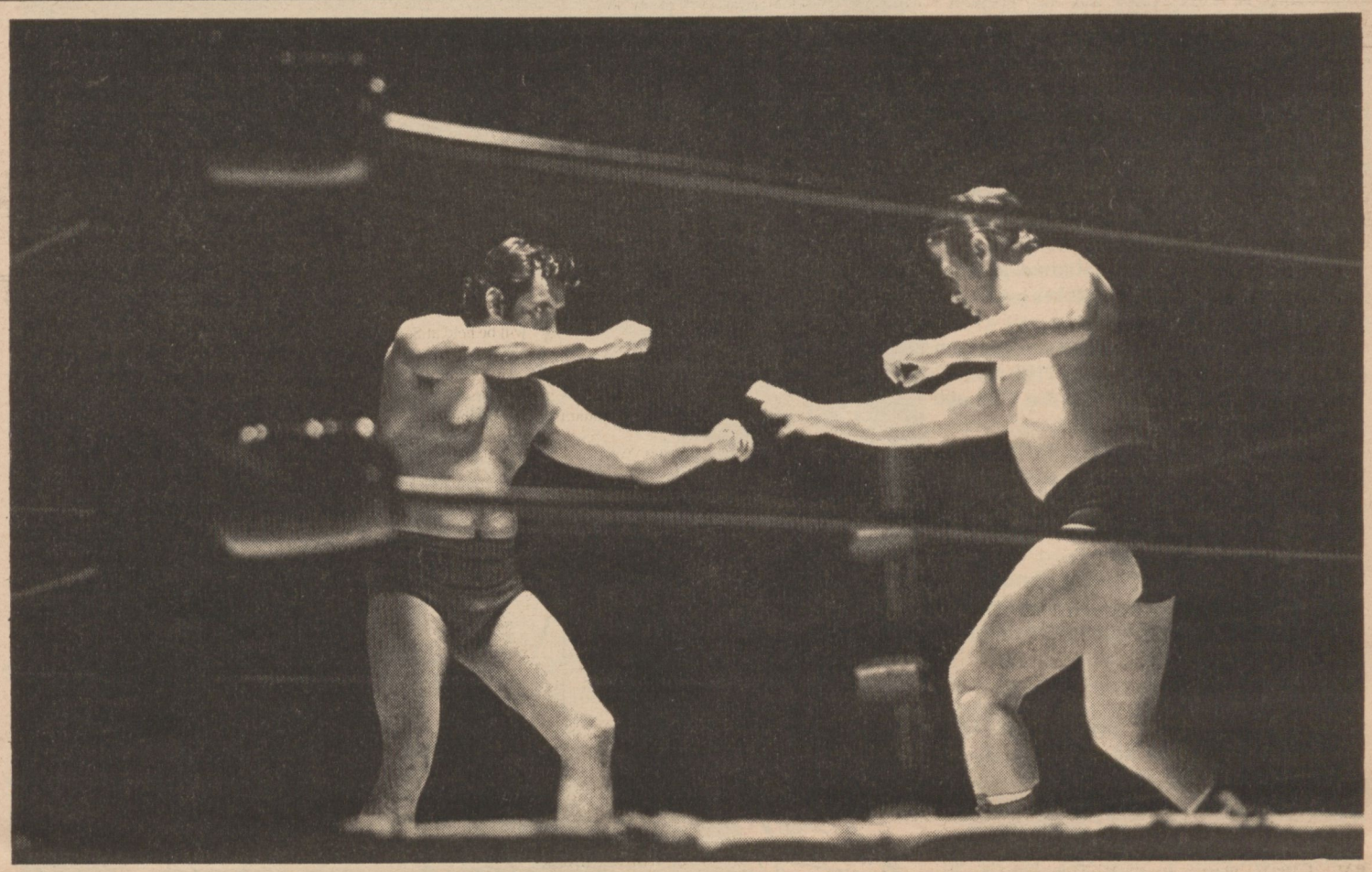
michael smith

Sports / Wrestling

Is it for real?

"...'I'd bet anything that it's fake" admits one.

'But I wouldn't put money on it, not my last dollar.'..."



"He's got him in The Claw ... it looks like, yes, yes, he's gonna win it ... it's all over ... the Chinaman wins again..."

As the crowd hooted and screamed its scorn for his decidedly un-American tactics, the Oriental wrestler bowed ceremoniously several times, then climbed through the ropes down into the small, hostile, predominantly Cub Scout gathering assembled in the television studio.

Fresh from his hard-won victory, the Chinaman (or whoever the lucky winner) still faced a grilling interview from WBTV's "Big" Bill Ward, the rotund anchorman in those years for television wrestling tapes destined for showing on local stations throughout the South. Ward's interviews were not exactly candidates for the electronic journalism Hall of Fame. Those being interviewed never failed to assume command of the situation, often threatening the unathletic Ward himself when his comments sometimes hinted of sarcasm, but never failing to warn their opponents of impending mayhem should they so much as set foot in the ring again. Depending on whether the winner was a representative of Good or Evil, the answers to Ward's incisive queries were delivered with reverent schoolboy jock shyness or sneering Crabby Appleton audacity which served to further infuriate and antagonize the attendant Cub Scouts, and quite often to lure the equally perturbed television viewer out to the local arena at some time during the upcoming week for "live" action, precisely as was intended.

Wrestling was a lot of fun in the late fifties and early sixties. We cheered our heroes -- George Becker, the Scott Brothers, Mike Clancy, and Chief Big Heart, the easy to anger Injun who did a clever tribal dance jig when doom was about to befall that night's unlucky pale-faced foe. Meanwhile, we screamed in horror at the success of the bad guys -- the fiendish Masked Bolos, "Skull" Murphy, and later Rip Hawk.

My own interest in the symphony of suet paralleled the fortunes of my personal favorite in those years, a missionary of Good named Billy "Tarzan" Darnell. One winter night in steamy Charlotte Coliseum with my grandparents and 11,000 other mat buffs, I watched Billy fight for the Heavyweight Championship of the World against a no-good, diabolical hunk of sin who was reigning champ. After nearly an hour of unparalleled ring acrobatics and a split of the first two of the prescribed three falls, both wrestlers lay helpless in the ring midway through the third fall, my own hero rendered immobile by a "drop kick" which from my point high in the Coliseum seemed to miss him by at least three feet. As the throng shrieked in panic, the champ crawled toward Darnell, managed just enough adrenalin to apply his infamous "Grapevine" hold, and pinned Darnell for the necessary three counts.

Darnell's failure in the Big Championship Match resulted in his subsequent exile from the area. Soon, my interest was floundering. For awhile I cheered the bad guys and later I just rolled in glee before the television at the antics of all involved with the presentation. And I began asking the question that every wrestling fan must sooner or later ask: Is it for real?

At precisely 8:15 most every Tuesday night, promoter Henry Marcus eludes the ropes and struggles into the ring, ready for yet another night of wrestling at Columbia's Township Auditorium.

There is a relatively small, but typically vocal crowd (1500 or so) on hand. The audience is amazingly diverse in make-up, represented by both young and old and more blacks than would be expected to watch a sport where virtually no blacks participate. "These people here tonight are veterans," comments an usher. "I don't even have to tell them where their seat is, because they buy the same one every week."

Hot dogs and beer dominate the pre-action lull. Finally, the sight of Marcus, microphone in hand, entering the ring is enough to start sporadic whooping and yelling which crescendoes as Marcus announces the night's opening bout, a one fall (round), 20-minute contest between Ronnie Paul and a guy from South America.

The hometown seems to add an extra dimension for the wrestling fan, often determining when the names are unfamiliar and whether a participant will be cheered or ignored. Not surprisingly, American wrestlers -- who are always from St. Louis or Dallas or Oklahoma City or Des Moines -- along with Canadians fare best with the crowds.

It is an uneventful opener, serving only as a primer for things to come. "Just wait," promises my usher friend, "things will get better. Maybe even some blood."

The ushers are among few in the building who question events in the ring. "I'd bet anything that it's fake," admits one. "But I wouldn't put money on it, not my last dollar."

With no blood forthcoming early in the girls match which is staged second, I wander off to the dressing room to interview one of the few real "names" on the night's card, Jerry Briscoe.

Briscoe considers himself one of a new breed of professional wrestlers -- young, college-educated, with experience in college or amateur wrestling, turned pro for love of sport as well as for the money involved.

Briscoe is a graduate of Oklahoma State, the nation's leading wrestling school, where he won an NCAA title in the 177-pound class.

"My big brother got me started in wrestling when I was seven years old," Briscoe explains as he lounges in a desk chair in one of Township's dreary, cluttered dressing rooms. His brother, Jack, recently fought Southern heavyweight champion Dory Funk Jr. to a draw in a match in Jacksonville.

Briscoe talks in no nonsense terms about wrestling. It is "mostly the money" which has him doing it, it is "like any business in structure" and, he believes, "if you work hard, you're gonna do well."

Money is, naturally, the dominant issue for everyone surrounding the presentation. It is why veteran promoters like Henry Marcus promote it in cities all over the country, it is why wrestlers wrestle, and it is why television stations beam the tapes to almost every geographic extremity of the country. "A good wrestler ... a beginner ... can make $12,000 a year," Briscoe says, "but it really depends on the individual. If you wanna wrestle six nights a week, then you can make more. I don't like to work my ass off and have no time for anything else. I average four nights a week."

Briscoe attributes wrestling's shady past with the "carnival wrestlers" like "Gorgeous George", who were more showmen than anything else, and certainly more showmen than they were wrestlers.

"One good thing about today's promoters is that they want young wrestlers. To be honest, when we had a bad name, wrestling was mostly older men. I've noticed that since I've been in, the promoters are going after young wrestlers a lot more than in the past."

As a result, according to Briscoe, "wrestling is now more respected than in the past."

Finally, The Question -- is it real?

Briscoe leans back. "I used to get mad and almost insulted when people asked me that. And they all do. But I've never thrown a match and I don't plan to start now. When they came to me to see if I wanted to enter pro wrestling, I said, 'C'mon, man, I'm not gonna get involved in that stuff.' Then I got in the ring with a couple of these guys. A lot of people don't realize how wrestlers get hurt. Broken arms and noses are the big thing, but a friend of mine, Al Torees, was killed in a match last year when someone crushed his chest in a match..."

"I've decided some people are gonna believe it's fake no matter what..."

Outside again, the crowd cheers lustily as a 300-pound brute named Big Boy Brown and Jim Dillon win a tag team match.

Finally, the main event. Briscoe is teamed with veteran Sandy Scott against a Jap named Matti Suzuki of Hiroshima and Len Hunter (of St. Louis, naturally).

Briscoe takes only four minutes or so to force the Japanese gladiator to seek refuge outside the ropes, where he finds dealing with a fan (nicknamed "Olive Oil" after Popeye's friend because of her looks, the guy next to me says, noting my pad) presents almost as many problems as Briscoe. A cop eventually sits her down, and Suzuki escapes back to the ring.

Soon Briscoe is being badly aggressed in the opponents' corner, and eventually the heroes lose the fall.

But Briscoe comes back to win the second fall with a "Figure Four", as the hold is called, thereby lending it a degree of credibility.

The final fall is a test of endurance, but Scott, cheered from the corner by Briscoe, eventually puts the "abdomen stretch" to Suzuki and the match is over.

Within minutes the crowd is gone. But they'll be back next week 'cause there's that big tag team match that everyone's been waiting for.

And not one of them will care about The Question. It just doesn't matter to them. And I'm kind of glad.

jim walser

cola

Upcoming events of interest in the Columbia area

Concerts

SONNY AND CHER will sing, dance and tell jokes at Carolina Coliseum on June 5 at 8 p.m. Tickets are on sale for $4.50, $5.50 and $6.50.

EDGAR WINTER will perform June 11 at 7:30 p.m. at the Sports Arena in Atlanta. Tickets are $4.50 in advance and $5.50 at the door. All seats reserved. Mail orders enclose self-addressed envelope with certified check or money order payable to "Howard Stein Enterprises, Inc.", P. O. Box 7930, Atlanta, 30309. Specify show and ticket desired. Orders received three days before the show will be held at box office.

BLACK SABBATH at Municipal Auditorium in Atlanta June 19 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are $3.50, $4.50 and $5.50. Mail order instructions same as above.

CARLY SIMON will give a concert at Atlanta's Symphony Hall of the Memorial Arts Center on June 1.

ROLLING STONES in concert at Charlotte Coliseum on July 6. Tickets set to go on sale June 6 with top price set at $6.50. Also with Mick and the boys are Stevie Wonder, Martha Reeves, and local gospel singers who are to be recruited during the course of the North American tour. Can't afford to miss THE biggest event happening in this area all summer.

B. J. THOMAS will perform at Atlanta Municipal Auditorium along with Parrish and Gurvitz, a new British group. Tickets are on sale for $4, $5 and $6. The gig is on June 13 at 8 p.m.

PROCOL HARRUM will perform July 13 at 7:30 p.m. in the Sports Arena in Atlanta. Tickets are $4.50 in advance and they'll be a dollar more at the door. Mail order info same as Winter concert above.

RARE EARTH will be in Atlanta Municipal Auditorium at 8 p.m. on July 18. Come watch Big Brother watch you.

URIAH HEEP, with special guest star John Baldry, will be in Atlanta July 19 at 7:30 p.m. in the Sports Arena. Tickets are $4.50 in advance, $5.50 at the door and the mail address is the same as the Winter concert.

USC SUMMER THEATRE will open for its summer season at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center on June 26.

ATLANTA JAZZ FESTIVAL is scheduled for Braves Stadium on Friday and Saturday, June 30 and 31. Recommended.

HARRY BELAFONTE will sing at Atlanta's Civic Center on May 24 at 8 p.m.

Specials

SPRINGS MILLS TRAVELING ART SHOW is on exhibition at Gibbes Gallery in Charleston through May 28.

WINTHROP COLLEGE is presenting an exhibition of student art through August 11 at Mai Rutledge Building.

RIVERWIND is the final production of Town Theatre. The John Jennings musical will run through May 29.

PERMATEX 200 stock car race will be the first "special" at the New Columbia Speedway. The speedway will be presenting racing thrills every three weeks. The Permatex is set for May 25.

HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES begins a run at Charlotte's Pineville Dinner Theatre. Buffet is set for 7 p.m. with the play scheduled for 8:45 p.m. Run begins May 16.

ARSENIC AND OLD LACE moves into its last three weeks at Charlotte's Independence Playhouse. Buffet is set at 6:30 p.m. with curtain time at 8:30 p.m.

REDD FOXX & Company will perform in Charlotte Coliseum on June 7 at 8 p.m. Along with Redd will be Demond Wilson and Slappy White, candidate for the Democratic Vice-Presidential nomination.

DUTCH FORK ART ASSOCIATION will hold its first show at Home Federal Savings and Loan Association through May 29.

NANCY RICKER WEBB will open a one-artist exhibition at Sandlapper Gallery May 21 to June 2. Ms. Webb specializes in miniatures with shows throughout the Carolinas.

GILMER PETROFF will exhibit watercolors at USC Aiken Regional Campus through May 31.

BOWLING TOURNAMENT Women's Southeastern Bowling Conference Tournament will be held at Pinewood Lanes in Spartanburg on June 3-4, 10-11, and 24-25. Open to the public.

SWAMP FOX BOAT CLUB presents its Annual Water Sport Day in Eutawville on June 4. Highlights will include boat races, water shows, and night dances.

SUN FUN FESTIVAL will be held in Myrtle Beach June 8-11. South Carolina's largest pageant will feature a beauty pageant, fireworks, and good times for all.

CAMP PLA-MOR in Windy Hill will be the scene for the 20th Annual Basketball, Football, Majorette and Cheerleader School. The conference is open to high school students and will run from June 15 through Sept. 1.

RIDGE PEACH FESTIVAL will be held June 10 at Trenton, S. C. Events include beauty contest, go-car races, and, of course, peach-eating.

CHEROKEE SERTOMA HORSE SHOW will benefit charity at this year's event. Set for 1:30 p.m. on May 27 at Piedmont Champions Arena in Gaffney, the horse show will feature Western, English, and Sport Events.

CHARLIE DUKE DAY is set for Lancaster on May 26 when the astronaut will be touted by South Carolinians.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY is featured as a photographic display at Clemson University's Rudolph Lee Gallery from May 15 - June 2. The photographs will feature the work of architect William Wurster.

MS. CORETTA KING will speak at Greenville Memorial Auditorium at 4 p.m. June 18. Proceeds will go to the King Center for Social Change in Atlanta, Ga.

CRAWDAD 300 will be held at Greenville on June 3. A turtle race will also be held along with the crayfish race.

AIRCRAFT FLY-IN is an experimental show which will be held at Santee on June 5-6.

HORSE SHOW. The Union Rotary Club will hold its annual horse show at the county stadium. Some of the best horse in the area will be shown on June 10.

HORSE SHOW. Westminster Jaycees will hold their annual horse show June 17-18.

A BIRTHDAY PARTY will be held in memory of Arthur Middleton at Middleton Place Gardens and Plantation Stables on June 25.

RICHARD III will be presented May 25 and 29 at 8 p.m. in Rodeheaver Auditorium on the Bob Jones University campus. Tickets are available for $2.50 and $3.50 each. Dr. Bob Jones will portray the title role.

REDD FOXX & Company will appear for four big shows at Atlanta Civic Center Auditorium with Demond Wilson, Slappy White, and Lyn Roman. Performances are scheduled for 8:30 p.m. on June 8 and 9 and at 6 and 9:30 p.m. on June 10. Tickets are on sale for $3, $4, $5, and $6.

Cinema

OH, CALCUTTA! -- Special area showing of the "barest play on Broadway". Play includes works by Beckett, Jules Feiffer, and John Lennon. Three days only, with showings at 2:30 and 8:30 p.m., June 6, 7, 8. Atlantic Theatre, 787-1225.

THE GODFATHER -- Marlon Brando and Al Pacino are outstanding in this bloody, intricate rendering of Mario Puzo's best-seller. Palmetto Theatre, 254-5800 Recommended.

THE LAST PICTURE SHOW -- Peter Bogdanovich's moving film of growing up in the early '50's is great movie making. Timothy Bottoms, Sam Johnson, and Ellen Burstyn. Plaza III Theatre, 254-7960.

CITY LIGHTS -- Another Charlie Chaplin film! "Modern Times" was a masterwork and this offers still another look into his rich past. Carolina Theatre, 252-8011. Highly Recommended.

MINNIE & MOSKOWITZ -- A human comedy by John Cassavetes and family and friends with excellent performances by Gena Rowlands and Seymour Cassel. Coming soon, Fox Theatre, 254-5212.

CULPEPPER CATTLE COMPANY -- See Osceola Review. Richland Mall Theatre, 782-2228.

SKYJACKED -- Charlton Heston, Yvette Mimieux, and James Brolin star in this slick film about skyjacking. Supposedly fresh from the morning papers, it's popular entertainment. Coming soon, Richland Mall.

TO KILL A CLOWN -- A murder mystery on a double bill with "The Boston Strangler" a better-than-expected flick with Tony Curtis, and Henry Fonda. Starts June 2, Miracle Theatre, 256-1950.

NOTE -- Listings subject to change.

New and recommended

PAPERBACKS

OUR GANG -- Philip Roth's satire of the Nixon administration is too frightening to be funny and too bitter to be apathetic. Some good writing with some excellent passages, but nothing really seems exaggerated.

THE BELL JAR -- Sylvia Plath's picture of a young woman's attempts to cope with her art and society. A chilling novel.

THE OTHER -- Thomas Tryon's horror story inspires genuine chills in his novel of two brothers -- one a "Goody Twoshoes", the other possessed. Scary!

THE DRIFTERS -- Another sprawling novel by James Michener, this one about young American expatriates in Europe.

T.V. SPECIALS

BUS STOP -- Marilyn Monroe gives a good performance as a chorus girl faced with over-zealous lover. May 28, 1:30 p.m., Channel 10.

THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE -- Audie Murphy and Bill Mauldin are extremely good in this film taken from Crane's Civil War novel. CBS Late Movie has finally produced another winner. June 6, 11:30 p.m., Channel 19.

DICK CAVETT SHOW -- Four per cent of the viewing audience couldn't be wrong. Catch as much of Cavett as you can, we may not have him to kick around anymore.

FILM ODYSSEY -- This collection of film classics presented by PBS has produced some excellent works from around the world. Hitchcock, Eisenstein, Chaplin, Lang, Rey, and Renoir are among the great directors whose films are presented. Friday, 10 p.m., Channel 35.

THE Joyful Alternative

...Books, Records, Clothes, Crafts, Headgear

2009 Green Street, Columbia, S.C.

"...'there's really no reason to bring a suit because we've been able to work out everything satisfactorily on the side of the consumer as well as the business.'"

Continued from page 1

court action, bad publicity, and possible loss of license, the beef dealers decided to drop the matter. The market for their low-priced product was too lucrative to chance losing it over a few hundred dollars worth of meat. No doubt the loss was easily absorbed, for the company has been doing business for several years in the Midlands area, as well as other parts of not only South Carolina, but surrounding states as well.

Another young housewife reported being taken by the same scheme two or three years ago, but embarrassment over her own gullibility caused her to keep quiet about the matter. After signing a contract accepting the goods, she probably rightfully assumed that little or nothing could be done about her loss.

Since that time, however, the South Carolina legislature has passed a law which could potentially prevent such shady dealers from conducting business in the state. The South Carolina Unfair Trade Practices Act, signed by the Governor in June, 1971, is a comprehensive statue providing strict penalties for unfair practices and giving broad powers to the Attorney General and the courts.

The act is modeled after legislation empowering the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to operate in the area of unfair trade practices and adopts almost the exact language of the FTC's empowering clause. The S. C. law reads: "Unfair methods of competition and unfair or deceptive acts or practices in the conduct of any trade or commerce are hereby declared unlawful."

Further coordinating the statute and FTC regulations, the S. C. lawmakers included a section instructing the state courts to be guided by the interpretations of the federal courts and the FTC. Thus, where the FTC determines that a certain business practice is illegal under their statute, it is illegal under South Carolina law as well.

In fact, the South Carolina law empowers its enforcement agencies to go much further. The FTC can issue cease-and-desist orders and then bring fines up to $5,000 if the dishonest businessman refuses to halt his practices, but the FTC has no power to recover damages already lost or to prevent the flim-flam operator from continuing to collect on past accounts. Under the S. C. law, the courts have the power to "make such additional orders or judgements as may be necessary" to restore to the victim "any moneys, or property, real or personal" which have been acquired illegally. The courts can also revoke the license authorizing the dishonest company to do business in the state.

The S. C. law also empowers the attorney general, and through him the various solicitors and county attorneys, to bring temporary or permanent injunctions against offenders, and by petitioning the Court of Common Pleas, to recover $5000 per willful violation or up to $15,000 per violation after an injunction has been issued. The law defines a willful violation as one where the violator "knew or should have known" his conduct was a violation.

The swindled housewife was a victim of a technique known in consumer law as a "bait-and-switch" operation. Bait-and-switch is a familiar sales tactic --- so familiar in fact that most people don't realize it's illegal. Like all unfair trade practices, bait-and-switch offers the consumer an incredible bargain, a money-saver too good to turn down. As in the case of the meat, it usually begins with an ad or flyer offering a premium product at a price low enough to lure the consumer to the business, only to discover that the merchandise is old, of poor quality, or damaged.

A salesman usually will attempt to switch the potential buyer to a more expensive product.

Federal Trade Commission guidelines, and thus S. C. law, define bait advertising as "...an alluring but insincere offer to sell a product or service which the advertiser in truth does not intend or want to sell." Even selling the product to the consumer is not an adequate defense if it "...is intended to provide an aura of legitimacy to the over-all operation."

In the case of the freezer meat sales, facts provided by the housewife and an examination of the company's advertising seem to indicate a number of violations. The advertisement itself is in violation if it uses statements or illustrations which create "...a false impression of the grade, quality...value...or origin or the product offered" or otherwise misrepresents the product in a way so that "...on disclosure of the true facts, the purchaser may be switched from the advertised product to another."

The ad mentions that the meat is guaranteed, but a written statement indicating the exact terms of the guarantee was not provided to the housewife as required by law. The meat sellers also failed to comply with a state law requiring that the purchaser be given a list specifying the kinds of cuts, and the total weight of each.

Considering the number of violations involved, it may seem strange that the housewife resorted to a lawyer's threatening letter. Under the Unfair Trade Practices Act, she could have filed a complaint with the Attorney General's office or with the solicitor or county attorney stating her case and requesting an investigation of the matter.

The answer, quite simply, is that the housewife didn't know about the law, nor did anyone else she talked with, except perhaps her lawyer. For although the law has been in effect for almost a year, there has yet to be a test case, according to the assistant attorney general charged with carrying out the law's provisions.

An interview with Assistant Attorney General M. J. Bowen revealed that his office has adopted the attitude that consumer problems should be settled through voluntary compliance if at all possible.

"We've gotten plenty of complaints," Bowen said, "but just about everybody, with the exception of about three people we've come up against, just agreed that we were right ... there's really no reason to bring a suit because we've been able to work out everything satisfactorily on the side of the consumer as well as the businessman."

"We don't have enough time, personnel or money to bring a law suit for every consumer complaint there is ... what we tried to do is set up a law (voluntary compliance section of the Unfair Trade Practices Act) whereby we could ... to give us a little leverage to try to ... I don't know ... to try to help the consumer out ... well, put it this way, if we take these people to court, the people are going to have a bad taste in their mouth toward the consumer, the consumer's got a bad taste in his mouth toward the businessman, and both of them are not going to like us because the consumer's going to think we didn't try the case right and the businessman's going to think we got too much on him and he's not going to like it so everybody comes out disappointed."

Bowen said the attorney general's office attempts to stay out of consumer cases which do not affect "a sufficient number of our citizens in the state." He pointed out that in addition to the attorney general's office, the Unfair Trade Practices Act empowers solicitors and county attorneys to carry out the act's provisions also.

"We encourage local officials like that to act in these matters," Bowen said, "because this office just doesn't have the personnel or the funds to enforce this law throughout the state."

Bowen also pointed out that under the statute, an individual consumer can bring action to try and recover his loss.

"If the consumer does not receive satisfaction, he can institute a suit against the person also," he said. "Now, the consumers can recover their actual damages from the suit...and if they can prove it was a willful action, they can get up to three times

"...'they give me the ad...we just have to run it'..."

actual damages, plus the court must award attorney's fees for the consumer's attorney."

The woman cheated by the meat company worried needlessly then about having to pay attorney's fees. Or did she? Her consternation points up one of the basic flaws in South Carolina's strong consumer protection law --- while it is strong on paper, it has thus far been of very little benefit to the consumer who usually knows nothing about it. No real attempt has been made by the attorney general's office or the press to publicize the law and to inform consumers of the wide number of unfair trade practices covered under the statute.

Rowland C. Campbell, an attorney for the Federal Trade Commission in Atlanta, told Osceola that it is difficult to get most newspapers to run consumer protection information because of their obligations to advertisers.

And not only do the advertising mediums avoid disseminating consumer information, the S. C. Unfair Trade Practices Act contains a section releasing the media from liability in most cases. While FTC regulations indicate that publishers can be held responsible for misleading advertising (though they seldom are), the S. C. statute stipulates that the act does not apply to media dessiminating an advertisement "when the owner, agent or employee did not have knowledge of the false, misleading or deceptive character of the advertising...." Obviously, proving the media had knowledge of the violation would be difficult.

The advertising representative handling the account of the beef firm at a local paper was asked if he had any knowledge of wrong-doing by the company in the past. "To tell you the truth, I don't know anything about them," he said. "The only thing I know is they give me the ad, I mean, and we just have to run it you know, unless they're actually...unless they would actually state something that would be illegal to anybody...you know, you could just look at it and tell it was illegal...."

State government has also done very little in the way of publicizing the law and its blanket protection. The wording of the statute itself prevents prosecutors and the Attorney General's office from releasing any information relating to an unfair trade practice case other than what is necessary for law enforcement. And since the attorney general's office has yet to try a case under the law, possible newspaper stories about consumer protection trials have not appeared.

In a state well known among consumer lawyers for its gypsters, it is difficult to believe an unfair trade practice affecting a significant number of citizens has not occurred.

Assistant Attorney General Bowen's statements seem to reflect an attitude on the part of state government that consumer protection is not worth risking the wrath of business in most cases. This attitude is not unusual. A 1968 University of Pennsylvania study of the ineffectiveness of consumer legislation found that "Even when a law enforcement official believes that a particular scheme has been made actionable by statute, he often does not prosecute because of a widely-held belief that, except in the most egregious circumstances, fraudulent operators should not be treated like criminals. Lawyers, business leaders and prosecutors have stated that 'judges, juries and district attorneys do not like to put businessmen in jail.'"

Of course, the cheated customer himself may bring suit under the Unfair Trade Practices Act, but a clause in the statute prevents an individual consumer from taking class action -- only the state can prosecute on behalf of more than one individual. Campbell, the FTC attorney, told Osceola that "many of the people who are injured by unfair trade practices are economically deprived; often they do not question if an offer is bonafide and generally lack the sophistication to take court action on their own behalf."

It would appear that if the state government is not going to allow private groups to bring class actions suits and develop a body of consumer law, the state should provide the money necessary to adequately staff the attorney general's office. Or why bother to have the law at all?

In conjunction with more funding, the state and its metropolitan areas should examine the effectiveness of consumer protection bureaus such as those established in California, Illinois, New York and Washington. These bureaus, usually made up of a cross-section of the community, perform the tedious task of processing each consumer complaint to determine which can be settled amiably and which require sterner action. Such bureaus have not only relieved understaffed state attorney generals' offices, but have saved consumers over a million dollars a year in each of the states mentioned.

Until the state either provides the enforcement for its comprehensive consumer law or allows private citizens to do so on a class action basis, dishonest merchants such as the beef discounters will continue to advertise openly and do business with little or no fear of reprisal.

Hospital protest

A coalition of Columbia activist groups has moved against the administration of Richland Memorial Hospital, leveling charges of discrimination against patients and employees and accusing the directors of "gross financial negligence."

The organizations, led by the Richland County Citizen's Committee, produced documents indicating that the hospital was guilty of segregation on its obstetrics floors, that the business department was using confidential social study information obtained from the Richland County Medically Indigent Service for use in collection procedures, that the hospital has accounts prior to 1969 listed with collection bureaus for which it can produce no accurate bills, and that the hospital's computerized billing procedures are often "abusive to the extent that they badger and intimidate patients with adequate coverage...."

In a statement released to the press on May 18, the Richland County Citizens Committee, Blacks United for Action, the United Citizens Party, the Midlands Welfare Rights Organization, and the S. C. Council on Human Relations also listed fourteen financial facts which they said indicated a need for Richland County Council to more closely examine the "$1.3 million dollar bomb dropped on them" by the hospital.

The organizations charged that while top administrators' salaries have doubled "by their own report" in the last year, salaries of the most poorly-paid employees increased about 5 percent. Other charges included statements indicating that the hospital's budget has never been presented to County Council; that the hospital has no means of measuring performance against expenditures and that despite these deficiences, the County Council turned over $500,000 in county medically indigent service funds to the hospital without requiring an independent audit -- which the organizations said was done despite the fact that "needy people are already being turned down for treatment" by the service.

Modjeska Simpkins, spokesman for the Citizen's Committee, said the hospital has almost doubled the number of administrators necessary as compared to hospitals of similar size and that many of the administrators "lack backgrounds in hospital administration."

She also accused the hospital administration of turning down a large grant to be used in a research study of Sickle Cell Anemia, a disease primarily of blacks, which would have provided funds and equipment resulting in "even more substantial savings to the hospital."

Spokesmen for the organizations backing the three-month study of the hospital said efforts are being made to bring about a state and federal investigation of the facility, particularly in the area of equal employment discrimination. Reports have already been submitted to S. C. Labor Commissioner James McGowan, according to Mrs. Simpkins.

"When McGowan contacted Mootz, (the hospital's director), he was told the hospital problems were not a labor matter but a human relations matter," Mrs. Simpkins said. "So then he had George Hamilton with the Governor's Advisory Commission on Human Relations to come in and do a study. After he got Hamilton's results, which indicated a lot of discrimination, he called McGowan back and told him he couldn't get any satisfaction out of Hamilton --- he decided it was a labor matter."

A spokesman for the hospital answered the committee's charges that employees had no voice in their affairs by stating, "We are aware we have some human relations problems in the hospital. We have a 15-person advisory committee of employes which is comprised of nine blacks, five whites and one oriental which cuts across all lines of employment in the hospital."

A former member of the advisory committee told Osceola, "The first thing they told us was we couldn't talk about money ... the second thing they told us was we had no power to make any decisions ... the committee was formed shortly after union activities started at the hospital, and in my opinion, that's the only reason it was formed."

Theatre

Continued

Bobby a proper blending of anxiety and horror.

Jerlene Anderson as Olanta steals the show. Brazenly dressed in a shocking red dress, she has perfected every wiggle, every trick in the book. Anderson leaves little to the imagination without playing her highest trumps. She is perfectly cast.

Gilliam's direction seems much smoother in this play also. Her actors demonstrate a better comic timing than in the other play. The production is much tighter, making "Midnight Ride" the more enjoyable of the two plays.

In his writing, Ashely demonstrates a sound understanding for the absurdist techniques of Samuel Beckett and Edward Albee, especially through his dialogue.

Like Beckett and Albee, he uses cliches, idle ramblings, and non sequitors to stress the emptiness and monotony of his characters. Like the other two playwrights, he is able to extract biting satire and comedy through his dialogue.

"A good friend describes me as a mixture of early Albee and Tennessee Williams," Ashley stated. "The abstract characters and technique so typical of Albee are there, but the settings and the themes are from Williams."

Williams! Ashley speaks the name with the greatest reverence. Then, he recites: "Suddenly, last summer, he seemed changed." He leaves little doubt--Williams is his great teacher.

"I'm fighting desperately against the 'molasses syndrome' in Southern literature," he said in reference to his works. "Most people would prefer the safety of Neil Simon but I can't give them that."

Besides his two plays, Ashley has edited "Measure Me,Sky", an anthology of poems by South Carolina students. "Nice poems like Henry Timrod wrote have no place in literature today. My co-workers and I have avoided this 'niceness' in our anthology," he said.

Ashley has also written a novel--"...about South Carolina politics with a 1970 setting." He frankly admits he doesn't have a publisher for the work but he doesn't seem too concerned at the moment.

Right now, he seems content to study his hometown's reaction to his plays. He knows he has shocked some of his old friends, and, maybe, outraged others.

Ashley has chosen to be controversial and, if necessary, unpopular. His plays satirize the type of existence he knew in Columbia all of his life. But he works with compassion, not malice. He realizes that his themes and ideas are indicative of a gradual change coming over this country--an opening of life for a fuller enjoyment. And he wants to show Columbians how to accept this change--lest it take them by surprise.

OSCEOLA PROFILE

(Pronounced "Os-cee-oh-lah")

Real Name: Powell

Home: Usually, Florida's swamps, though now rests at Fort Moultrie, S. C.

Age: Approximately 170-years-old

Profession: Ecologist, organizer, revolutionary, fighter

Hobbies: Stabbing whitemen's treaties

Last book read: None

Last accomplishment: "The most complete massacre of U. S. Arms in the history of this country", commonly referred to by the whiteman as "Dade's Massacre."

Quote: "Many subscriptions make my heart soar like the eagle"

Profile: Half English, quarter Negro slave, quarter Indian, Osceola is known for his stealth, his concern for nature and the "natural" instinct. A leader, a warrior, a patriot.

Scotch: No, he's English, Negro and Indian. We've already told you that.

Yes, I'm living in a quagmire worse than any swamp in Florida. Make my heart soar like the eagle with the next 26 issues of Osceola magazine. ($5 for regular subscription; $4 for students and military)

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